THE
POETRY
REVIEW

Volume 28
1937

The Poetry Society
London

Kraus Reprint
Nendeln, Liechtenstein
1969

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KRAUS REPRINT
A Division of
KRAUS-THOMSON ORGANIZATION LIMITED
Nendeln/Liechtenstein
1969
Printed in Germany
Lessingdruckerei Wiesbaden

MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM

THE POETRY REVIEW

First published (as *The Poetical Gazette*) May, 1909

VOLUME XXVIII

MCMXXXVII
LONDON, W.C. 1:
THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)

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VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

DEFEAT of the hero has been one of the commonest themes in literary and dramatic art from the earliest to the present times. Defeat by the forces of nature, the forces of life and the world, the stupidity and bigotry of men, and by what the ancients called “ the gods.” We see it in the great dramatists from Aeschylus to Shakespeare; in novelists as diverse as Cervantes, Tolstoi, Hugo, Conrad and Wells. In Kipling we see the shadow of ultimate defeat even where we see present victory. This attitude on the part of great minds cannot be wholly ascribed to the essential nobleness of tragedy; it is a view of life which such minds in all ages and all countries have been disposed to take. No one has better expressed that sense of ultimate defeat than Shakespeare speaking through Macbeth:

> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more; it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.”

That was a considered utterance. There can be no doubt of it. Every line bears the marks of deliberate intent. Usually it is unfair to impute to the novelist or the dramatist the opinions of his characters: but here it was not Macbeth speaking; it was Shakespeare. The words are out of character with Macbeth. It is much more than magnificent poetry. It is at once a terrible admission and a terrible indictment; a terrible judgment upon life.

At first it seems unanswerable. Nevertheless, are we to accept that judgment as final? Man grows in wisdom; we must not accept without question the judgment of our fathers. To do so would be, as grown men, to accept as final the judgments of our youth; for there is no essential difference between the growth of the individual and the growth of the race. Both proceed on exactly the same principles. Each of us is the race in miniature just as each of us, in the ante-natal period, goes through the numerous stages of pre-human development.

Views of life may develop into habits of thought which are not necessarily true to what we subsequently discover. For a while the new discovery and the old habit may continue side by side.

Tragedy has a dark attraction for us, because the greatest of men have had the most tragic terminations to their lives. We associate tragedy with greatness in some form or other, and rightly. Where we err is when from tragedy we argue defeat.

There is no defeat except the defeat of the spirit, and even the resistance of the spirit to the point of defeat may amount to moral victory.

There was no defeat in the death of Christ or in the death of Socrates. Both have lived on, victorious. But—and here is a point worth noting—to their contemporaries, all but a few clear-sighted ones, the end of each was defeat. Our human and temporal atmosphere is so dense, the general visibility so poor, that not many eyes can penetrate it. But our sight is growing. We see things now that our fathers could not see. Science and experience are opening our eyes. Even contemporary world events have taught us that victory and defeat can be equally illusive. In the world of matter the two are interchangeable. In the last war there were neither victors nor vanquished, as later events have proved. I give this merely as a homely instance of how current judgment can be deceived. Yet, as we know, that sort of current judgment repeats itself; it has become a habit of the human mind, though repeatedly disproved. If there were another war, we should again be talking about victors and vanquished, and there would be neither the one nor the other.

But the conception of ultimate defeat for man dies hard. We see death and we see the end of the universe. In the face of such material facts, what hope has man?

None, if we cannot see behind the material screen. But increased knowledge and sharpened consciousness are giving us this power. Science has told us that, in the physical world, nothing is totally extinguished, though everything is subject to change. Instead of extinction there is a new beginning. Nothing that we know can die completely, so we can put death out of the picture. It is a name for something which we did not understand. Even the end of the universe should not be an absolute end if the elements of matter are, as we are told, indestructible.

There is perhaps little consolation in such reflections. They are too remote. Let us come down to daily life. The more we understand life as we see it in living creatures, the clearer becomes our relationship to the intelligence which operates all life. One thing (as we observe) soon becomes evident: that is, that all living creatures are conscious or unconscious instruments in a scheme whose purpose is hidden from us. The care of the ewe for her lamb is remarkable enough, but the care of the human mother is still more remarkable, because here the knowledge of death, with its seeming ultimate frustration, is no deterrent. Man's knowledge of life's limitations would paralyse effort, were it not for his blind but undying instinct that he is working for a common and universal end. He knows that the earth and the universe are ultimately doomed, but even this knowledge does not deter him from doing things which bring him no material reward. There is not one of us who does not do such things, in simple faith and charity. Death was spiritually conquered when life began, in face of it. The material victor, it is, in spiritual fact, a nullity, or life would not dare to continue. No reasonable person would do anything if he knew that his efforts were futile. He does things because he knows, within himself, that his efforts are not futile. His God-given instinct tells him so. It is not divine irrationality, it is divine rationality, which makes him continue his efforts; and if he needs support he can find it in the humblest vegetable. It dies undefeated, for its seed goes on. The spirit of the vegetable has made death a nullity.

There are analogies. Does the apple die when it falls from the tree and is eaten? Of course not; it becomes part of the chemistry of our bodies, and goes on. Does the written word expire when the book perishes? Of course not, for its message has passed into the minds of its readers, to become a part of their mental chemistry, and thus to react on life, present and future. Nothing that has once been can be without effect, and the chain of effect is endless.

The light of Christianity, obscured through twenty centuries, is only now struggling through. So far, as Nietzsche observed, there has been one Christian, and he died on the Cross; but Christianity did not die with him as Nietzsche goes on to say. It has been alive but sleeping ever since. It will come into its own when it has broken down all the forms built to restrain and pervert it.

While man pins his faith to pure materialism he can never be anything but unhappy, because matter is continuously unstable, and he can found his happiness nowhere in it. He must put his trust in matter *and* the idea, in the body *and* the soul, in the blood *and* the spirit. That is not compromise nor an unholy union, but a sacred marriage without which there can be no true issue.

We can only walk by the flickering candle within us, and there is nothing in the last resort but faith in it. Faith is the only thing, but it is everything. Faith will not move a grain of sand, much less a mountain, having no interest in doing so; but a moving mountain cannot overwhelm it. It is stability where all else shifts by physical law.

The very heroes, whose lives the poets and dramatists have taken as symbols of man's inevitable defeat, have lived on to become our inspirations. It is only by purely material standards that man can be defeated. His career, chequered though it has been, and gloomy though it seems to our present eyes, is sufficient evidence of his power of victory.

Tragedy in its highest form is grandeur; it exalts the spirit as nothing else can exalt it; to the very greatest lives it is a necessary climax; but it must not be confused with defeat. It is not, in the end, even material defeat, as we see in the classic cases of Christ and Socrates; and it is always spiritual victory.

The defeatist theory of life may add a glamour to tragedy, but it is a false glamour, an attempt to make ourselves seem more heroic than we are, for it is certainly more heroic to go on in the face of ultimate defeat than in the face of ultimate victory. But man is growing up; he is passing that stage when he had to exalt himself with images of himself as hero. He is man, a creature with a destiny. S. W. POWELL.

AT RIVER'S EDGE

BUT, beautiful body, I could not have told,
not guessed, till clothes that seemed
intrinsic you had dwindled to a husk
hiding feet only, what you truly were—
less animal than flower:
have known that you, two-shaded (white and gold:
tinged where the sun had touched you), would reveal
flowers' delicate sun-awareness;
recall cool radiance of flowers
with this curbed glowing smooth unstartling whiteness;
that you who moved with leopard's litheness
clad, unclothed would sway
as flowers do, seem
a rare, strange, pale carnation! N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

ON A THEME OF JOHN COWPER POWYS

ENTER thine inmost self, unmask that core
Of being which, like a candle burning
In a windless deep, leaning nor turning,
Keeps tryst with time; search inwards and explore
The soul's essential substance long innate
With the spirit of Lilith, reprieving
Pure the pristine flame: give over grieving
The seeming insufficiency of fate.
Dissemble not—and as the dark cypress
In Boecklin's master-canvas proudly spears
Its fingered token to the twilight sky—
By faith-found unity of mind defy
The blandishments of men, their bandied fears,
Setting aside the world's unseemly stress.

E. CURT PETERS.

HIGH NOON

COULD Time's tyranny be overtaken,
The sun suspend his immemorial flight
Across the timeless skies,
The day forbear to leap into the night,
All winds into their windless heart be stilled.
Could blossoms cease to shower
Their leaves upon earth's sepulchre,
Their scent be pressed into one ageless flower—
Full bloom, full perfume, in one perfect round—

Then, at high noon,
Then would the windy tapers of our light
Melt in one flame, one consummation.
No more the fury of frustration,
No more the crumbling feet of the hour,
No more Death's spectre
Pointing his sceptre to the night.

For then, no age, no year, no hour,
Could whisper, " I am passing," " I am passed."
Then might we, too, be caught
Into that timeless hush ; and all our thought,
Our passion, our endeavour and our rhyme,
Attain fulfilment in that perfect close
Of the sun, the wind, the rose.

Then stand, stand fast, O sun !
At that meridian ;
Be thy high tide, O Time !
Suspended in the outer seas ;
Be the high zenith of our power,
The rounding of our rhyme,
Commensurate with these—
This full, unebbing tide,
This consummation of the wind and sun and flower.

GERTRUDE VALLANCE.

Cape Town.

A NOTE ON THE NEW AUDEN

EVEN his coldest critics will agree that Mr. Auden has proved a robust writer in the handful of years during which he has been known to the reading public. Two rather full volumes of miscellaneous poetry, three verse dramas (in collaboration), and a work half-prose half-verse, are not a meagre output. With the publication of the latest of these, a collection of thirty-one poems entitled *Look, Stranger!* (Faber), Mr. Auden's work is seen to have reached definitely a new stage, and it is in the belief that it ought now to be inspected calmly that this note is being written.

There were excellent reasons for disliking the earlier work of Mr. Auden. It was very obscure, uncouth, full of private associations and private jokes. There were patches of unassimilated influence—Hopkins, Old English. Poets of this clique seemed to have shrugged their shoulders at the public, and written only for themselves.

> Wystan, Stephen, Christopher, all of you,
> Read of your losses.

It seemed as if one were overhearing a private conversation, and much of it had the self-conscious rowdiness of a student party in a neighbouring room. At the same time there were some who recognized in Mr. Auden's work a peculiarly strong and original flavour, maybe an unattractive flavour, a width of subject, a robust uproarious attack, colloquial as Browning, with an occasional vivid metaphor, all of which seemed to signal him out from the rest of the school.

It may be that writing for the stage induced him towards the habit, I should say the training, of lucidity. The stage is the most important of the few remaining fields of operation in which the poet can be in contact with the general educated public of his time, as distinct from the small and rarefied world of poetry-readers. The verse inscription might be another such field. If an acted verse drama is to be a reasonable proposition at all, ready intelligibility and what is known as " entertainment value " are necessities. Few can have understood *The Orators*, and much of the *Poems*, but in *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, whatever its faults as a play, there were certain passages of plain and excellent poetry:

Now through night's caressing grip
Earth and all her oceans slip,
Capes of China slide away
From her fingers into day
And the Americas incline
Coasts towards her shadow line.
Now the ragged vagrants creep
Into crooked holes to sleep:
Just and unjust, worst and best,
Change their places as they rest:
Awkward lovers lie in fields
Where disdainful beauty yields:
While the splendid and the proud
Naked stand before the crowd
And the losing gambler gains
And the beggar entertains:
May sleep's healing power extend
Through these hours to our friend.
Unpursued by hostile force,
Traction engine, bull or horse
Or revolting succubus;
Calmly till the morning break
Let him lie, then gently wake.

This appears to me beautiful by any standards, and I could willingly wade through many inferior pages to find it.

Look, Stranger! could not be called in any sense a "new start": it displays growth, and healthy growth, in the direction indicated. Consider it with the *Poems*, and you appreciate the perspective of the journey travelled in these years. In the discussion of what is intelligible it is only safe to express a personal opinion. I must say, then, that personally, I find the majority of these poems intelligible, hastening to add (since that word can mean anything to-day) I use the word at its ordinary value. There is still in this book, I think, a certain amount, perhaps a good deal, of the obscure, but it is less the result of capricious ambiguous grammar and involved thinking, more the concomitant of his matter, which is very psychological. It may be said that without the vague understanding of modern psychology we all have now, with our loose talk of complex and inhibition, dream and the subconscious, these poems would be largely meaningless. While on the other hand without precise information many of them cannot be perfectly understood. There are, however, passages of a frank power and simple beauty in frank and simple poems, which everyone may enjoy. Such a poem is No. II, from which I select two stanzas :

> Now North and South and East and West
> Those I love lie down to rest ;
>   The moon looks on them all :
> The healers and the brilliant talkers,
> The eccentrics and the silent walkers,
>   The dumpy and the tall.
>
> She climbs the European sky ;
> Churches and power stations lie
>   Alike among earth's fixtures :
> Into the galleries she peers
> And blankly as an orphan stares
>   Upon the marvellous pictures.

The subject is commonplace : the moon, the single ancient light on so much variety ; but the treatment is original and pleasing. I am not referring to the mention of power stations in one breath with churches. That may be, if anything, just a shade too smart for the tenderness of the emotion. The originality is in the style, which is as simple as speech and yet capable of a fine stroke of the imagination in the final simile.

It will be observed that the two passages I have quoted are identical in their mood of pitying love. Mr. Auden is above all things a love-poet, although in a different sense from that which we commonly understand. This love is universal love, like Whitman's—indeed his resemblance to Whitman might be elaborated—but he is tragic where Whitman was cheerful, horror-stricken where Whitman was inflated to a terrific pressure with faith in America and Man. Many of Auden's poems are also love-poems in the other sense, but all is saturated with his sorrow for the times. He finds himself very much aware of the pretty pass we have come to, as he views it, within and without, the psychological sickness, the intensifying barbarity of Capitalism, for he is a Communist. He sees the slender dams of culture and tradition as unable to withstand this historic avalanche.

For what by nature and by training
We loved, has little strength remaining.

He has shut the door on escape into another mode of thought, which would be perfectly possible and legitimate. For the artist is not *responsible* for his age, his job being to produce art. How much does *Ulysses* reflect the war through which it was composed, or the prose of Sir Thomas Browne the spiritual battles of the seventeenth century? But the "contemporary consciousness" has all our votes to-day, and Auden is much in the fashion. He is a doctor with one hand on the pulse of Europe. He has made his verse no more than a seismograph of the age. His love poems appear, as a consequence, frustrated and unhappy, yet at the same time strangely impersonal, as if he were so much occupied with his feeling that society prevents the fruition of intimacy that he cannot be occupied with the subtleties of intimacy at all. No description of the loved person ever appears, hardly a direct statement of love. All is reflection, and usually unhappy reflection, on the nature of an intimacy, or on Love itself. Poem No. X, which is not a love-poem, contains these stanzas:

At the end of my corridor are boys who dream
Of a new bicycle or winning-team;
On their behalf guard all the more
This late-maturing Northern shore,
Who to their serious season must shortly come.

Give them spontaneous skill at holding rein,
At twisting dial, or at making fun,
That these may never need our craft,
Who, awkward, pasty, feeling the draught,
Have health and skill and beauty on the brain.

The clock strikes ten: the tea is on the stove;
And up the stair come voices that I love.
Love, satisfaction, force, delight,
To these players of Badminton to-night.
To Favel, Holland, sprightly Alexis give.

I have quoted two stanzas because they illustrate that occupation of mind, and a third because it illustrates the direct expression of sympathy. All three appear to me moving verses.

If I have conveyed the impression that Mr. Auden's work is pessimistic, that was not my intention. Pessimism forms no part of the communist's belief, but the humane communist can only look forward through a period, and out of a period, of chaos, "towards the really better world." Auden is seen in one view to be exactly at cross-purposes with modern culture: he is subtle where it is simple, simple where it is subtle. I think it is characteristic of modern English culture to retain a blandly simple acceptance of modern society, but to grow subtle about the individual character. Auden sees a sinister, subtle meaning in every modern phenomenon, but can be as crude as a schoolboy in the depicting of character.

Crudity has been until now the great failing in his work. There have lived on side by side a mature, intelligent, sympathetic observer of humanity, and a great schoolboy full of bad jokes and exaggerated opinions. The incongruity has been most acute in the plays. In *The Dog Beneath the Skin*, for example, the fine verse of the Chorus is offset by the amazing crudity of the satire in the action. It might well appear that the authors had no knowledge of their living subjects at all. Their scenes in the Ostnian Royal Palace, in the railway-train with the financier, in the Nineveh Hotel, are the kind of satire that one expects from a *Daily Worker* cartoonist but not from a dramatic poet. In a very amateurish production this play was as embarrassing to witness as a village hall entertainment. It would not stand comparison with *Murder in the Cathedral*. Nor does there seem to be much improvement in *The Ascent of F6* (Faber). The meeting of the big-wigs and imperialists to evolve a plan for saving British interests in Sudoland is such a travesty of the possible behaviour of such persons that the satire misses the target. It is no good making melodrama-villains out of the characters you hate. Their villainy in actual life is a very much more subtle affair than Messrs. Auden and Isherwood give them credit for. How can the public that feeds daily on the novelist's fine analysis be convinced by such a character as the Financier. The authors will have to draw their characters with more distinction or compose a drama of abstractions, a modern morality play.

Look, Stranger! is not altogether free from the taint of crudity. The excellent qualities of this poet's mind appear to me, as I say, its originality, vigour and sympathy: not delicacy or refinement. And the great poets have had both the power and the subtlety. To speak symbolically Mr. Auden appears to possess an outstanding mind, but a commonplace soul. Poem XIV, originally "A Communist to Others," is a lively onslaught on various capitalist types, the athlete, the mystic, the man-of-the-world. To the mystic who dares to inform

> The starving that their one starvation
> Is personal regeneration
> By fasting, prayer and contemplation,

the poet replies:

> Others have tried it, all delight
> Sustained in that ecstatic flight
> Could not console
> When through exhausting hours they'd flown
> From the alone to the Alone,
> Nothing remained by the dry-as-bone
> Night of the soul.

I am not concerned with the fact that this is poor stuff, but with the essential vulgarity of the thought. I have had no mystical experience whatever myself, but this seems to me the scorn of the journalist, or the tub-thumper, for what is beyond their comprehension. Mr. Auden has identified himself too much in this poem with the objects of his sympathy, and it becomes a problem for the artist who makes common cause with the masses, how to speak their thought and preserve the refinement of art. For the great artist is essentially an aristocrat, and we expect of him better "manners," that is, greater tolerance for other ways of living, than this stanza betrays. Compare any passage out of Yeats with this, and it is not difficult to pronounce, "This is the Patrician, this the Plebeian brain."

Further instances of vulgarity might be offered, but it lurks rather in a general cast of thought. Mr. Auden simplifies too much. He likes to convey a rapid journalistic impression of the modern world—the arterial road through the Georgian park, hunger marchers in the Close at Barchester. His English village is really the village of musical comedy seen through red spectacles. His parson, general, squire, and curate are crude and artificial types, a vulgarisation like the journalist's, only the values are reversed. It was amusing to notice more than a slight resemblance between *Young England* and *The Dog Beneath the Skin*. Technically, *Look, Stranger!* is much in advance of the *Poems*. Obscurity often springs from imperfect skill, since it is more difficult to put simple words upon a complicated thought than involved words, and only a practised raconteur can tell a tale with smooth lucidity. In the best of these poems the effect is achieved by a vigorous imagination working within direct and forceful words.

O for the doors to be open and an invite with gilded edges
To dine with Lord Lobcock and Count Athma on the platinum benches
With the somersaults and fireworks, the roast and the smacking kisses—
    Cried the cripples to the silent statue,
    The six beggared cripples.

In this book influences have been mostly digested: we are no longer given small draughts of neat Hopkins:

Me, March, you do with your movements master and rock
With wing-whirl, whale-wallow, silent budding of cell.

The influence of the later Yeats, however, is still apparent. In particular No. IX seems to have been composed not far from that beautiful shadow. For such lines occur as:

    Noble emotions organized and massed . . .
    Language of moderation cannot hide . . .

reminiscent both in sound and phrasing of the Yeats of

        Monuments of unageing intellect.

While another Yeats' device, that of a certain style of question asked in the middle of a poem, is found in No. III:

    Who nurtured in that fine tradition
      Predicted the result?

These poems demand close attention, do not all yield their content readily, but the alert and sympathetic reader should be able to find in them much that is arresting, and much that will move and please. LAURENCE WHISTLER.

NEPTUNE'S DAY

FAR Neptune is my home; I come from there;
I go there when the earth-days hedge me round;
And there the far horizons and the sound
Of immemorial winds upon my hair
Refresh my crowded senses, and display
The wide elliptic rhythm that I follow
Through the immense cloud-spaces, in the hollow
And vast pale lilac-tinted day.

These cosy hills, these farms and tiny valleys
Compact, with soon-recurring interchange. . . .
Home to so many . . . seem the huddled, strange
And hive-like workings of a swarm that dallies
Within the heavy earth's integument;
Treading their slow interminable round
Of hard smooth-beaten clay upon the ground;
A-dream within their grey-hued cerement.

For Neptune is my home, and so they seem.
But when desire is loosed and I shall sever
All moorings, and the infinite forever
Is my vast Day: when limits are a dream;
Upon those vaster courses, I shall say,
"Those little sudden waves in the green, and these
Neat-rhythmed farms, fulfil and hold their peace,
They too, in their green garden, for a day."

They too, I know, shall have their even penny,
Nor more, nor any less. What if to me
Is given for nursery all the purple sea;
Clouds for my toys and the wide run of any
Wreathed ring of pearly vapour for my play?
They have their wholesome fare and balanced hours,
The sweet attendances of beast and flowers
And are content with this. It is their way.

MAXWELL ARMFIELD.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE TEAPOT POET

"The day of the great themes and the grand manner is no more. It is no longer the place of the poet to set forth on epic adventures; to deal with the fundamentals of man's life and destiny; to plumb the depths of tragedy and drama, and to reveal heroic protagonists stalking across a universal stage. Poetry belongs to the infancy, or, at best, the adolescence of the race; in a day of science and reason, such as our own, the prose writer is inevitably supreme; it is to the common journalist that we turn rather than to Homeric majesties; while the grinding of wheels and the clicking of levers have made the organ-throbs of a Milton all but inaudible. Consequently the poet—in so far as he survives at all—must confine himself to mere parlour performances; he must be concerned with the secondary things, the ornamental trivialities, the polishing of little shining beads of song, rather than with those facts that give wonder, meaning and vitality to the world about him."

HOW often do we hear sentiments like these confidently proclaimed! How often do we hear the poet consigned to a limbo of shimmery gauds and simmering afternoon teas! How often do we find him tolerated as one might tolerate a lap-dog or a pedigreed cat, and, like these creatures, relegated to his proper but unimportant place! So common has been the attitude of slightly supercilious contempt expressed toward the poet; so frequently has he been told, in effect, " This is an adult world, and poetry is not quite an adult performance "; so freely have laymen and critics agreed in assumptions of the minor place of poetry not only actually but potentially, that it strikes me that the time is more than ripe for a word in defence.

Let me acknowledge, to begin with, that there may be a certain superficial justification for the attitude of condemnation; that the teapot poet may actually seem to be in the ascendancy. The sputterings of insipid but innocuous rhymsters; the chirpings and twitterings of those who can only sing of the hem of a lady's dress, or of " cherub eyes " and " ruby lips "—are these not well known to us all, and do they not predominate in poetry recitals, and in the pages certain periodicals? But are these typical of modern poets? Did not their blood relations—in the shape of a million forgotten bards—exist in all past centuries? And do their performances exhaust the possibilities of the modern poet, any more than the tinsel paragraphs of a society editor exhaust the possibilities of modern prose?

It has long been my personal conviction—based on a mass of fairly obvious evidence—that the poet to-day is not only acutely needed, but needed as rarely before in the history of the world. Far from approaching the end of his possibilities, he has entered an era when he is vitally required as a teacher, a guide, an interpreter, a prophet. For it is precisely in times of greatest intellectual and emotional confusion; precisely when old standards, traditions and values are collapsing, that the poet is most in place as a torch-bearer, a bringer of illumination. Consider, briefly, the spiritual state of the modern world: consider how science, having flung a challenge to religion, has spread out a panorama of incredible distances in time and space, wherein we clutch for certainty as in a gigantic vacuum; consider how the social strands of the world are tangled and snarled, with the flames of national and international disturbances flaring on all horizons, and with politicians and common men alike bewildered before the spectre of devastation. Consider how the very fabric of life has been relaxing in some of the centres of civilization: how starvation has been entering in the midst of plenty, how moral aims and meanings have tended to be consigned to the realm of myths and fictions, how the conflicts of men, of classes and of nations have been sharpened and accentuated. And then pause to inquire whether, amid all the tumult and distraction, there is not abundant room for the poet; whether he may not shed his interpretations where now there is no light, whether he may not soften the outline of ugliness with a consoling beauty, whether he may not modulate mystery with wonder, and penetrate beneath the mask of the world's despair to find some enduring flame veiled from ordinary eyes.

To me it appears that here is alluring material—fresh, vital, and inexhaustible material for the poet. I would not maintain that the field has been abundantly explored; that much if anything ultimate has yet been said as to the amazing universes unfolded by modern science; that any lines of immortal significance have been written on the theme of this smitten and agonized modern world. In fact, I would say that most experiments in this field have failed—and for the reason that they have erred too much on the side of prose. But, precisely on this account, the territory is still open and virgin; precisely on this account, there is still unlimited room for the bold explorer, for the able navigator, for the pioneer who would put forth across unconquered seas and lands. Let the teapot poets continue to dawdle and chat; let them pore over their bits of fustian, and revel in their triumphs—which, after all, only embrace sovereignty over a drawing-room; but the whole broad world lies in waiting without, and he who has strength and daring and originality may lead across the uncharted vastnesses, and in so doing may produce work as vital for our own era as that of Virgil, Milton or Dante was for their particular generations.

Perhaps it will be well, by way of conclusion, to call attention to a fact which should be evidence to any one who pauses to consider it, but which none the less has been rather generally overlooked. Let me therefore quote from Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's recent volume, *The Poet as Citizen*:

> ". . . Poetry has engaged upon its business the strongest intellects in our known history, and that . . . as a part of their most serious business in life. Who can deny this sheer power to Aeschylus, to Pindar, to Lucretius, to Dante, to Leonardo da Vinci, to Michelangelo, to Carducci, to Racine, to Hugo, to Goethe: to our own tremendous Milton, manly Dryden, serious Wordsworth, equally serious Shelley? How came poetry to engage, to captivate the massive practical intellect of Samuel Johnson? Surely that last question suffices to carry the answer."

The truth of these contentions, it appears to me, is undeniable. And therein, I submit, is to be found the brightest hope for the future and the ultimate refutation of the teapot poet.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

TO JOANNAH

MY love for you is like a strong rock
Whereon the waves beat ;
Base sunk in my loins, and its tip-top
Divides the place where the red waters run
In a whirlpool.
My love for you is like a strong rock
Whereon the winds weep,
Sobbing till the breaking of the green light
Of the desperate dawn. . . .

Chimneys are tossed in the gutters,
Slates slapped by the rain.
Comes the Green light,
And the long pain.

Bearing the long, the ever long shock,
Like a strong rock.

FRANCIS BERRY.

THE BEGGAR-WOMAN

YEARNING, as graveyard flowers grope up at light,
She kneels, and planets swirl within her head.
Within the breast osmotic shift of blood moves lips
To murmur lies, lovely in piteous poor deceit.

The pungent singing of the many-feathered thought
Flaps motions to her hands. Uncertain messages,
Like wildeyed children lost in parks,
Or idiot's stare before a bright machine,
Attempt the passage, insulated, crash to earth.

Her grimaced tears breed public stare,
And still she kneels: all former life forgotten,
Or remembered only as another's faded tale.
Her only future, Now. Dead are her clothes,
The shoes and all the tired body.

Only the dying eyes hold life:
Only in dying do the eyes find love.

H. W. TREECE.

SNARED

SWEET lark, you sang of lovelier worlds than this,
Until our hearts grew homesick for heaven's bliss;
Music so sweet to earth could not belong—
It is the echo of immortal song.
You caught the wand'ring voices of the air,
And with spent harmonies made earth more fair;
Still they are trav'lling on from sphere to sphere,
But in this noise-crazed world men cannot hear.
You climbed the sky's star-dusty, steep highways,
And lost yourself in their intricate maze:
The lark that lured you there was a decoy—
Once he was free as air and trill'd his joy;
Full early is your soaring spirit taught,
That folly's blandishments are dearly bought.
Now you are fast entangled in the net,
The wily fowler's satellites have set . . .

Hark! lovely Philomel is sorrowing—
He mourns the fleet, sad ecstasy of spring!
The moon-laved pearls of his exquisite grief
Lie light as May dew on each lilting leaf.

When from Time's womb-dark shell you broke away,
The stars all wept, O hapless child of May!
Sad-eyed Cassandra boded ill for you—
All that was hidden in the skies she knew,
She saw the shuttles running to and fro,
Unravelling new bondages and woe;
The stars divulged to her their secret signs,
And destiny revealed her dark designs:
She saw, before the dew was on the day,
The fowler waiting to decoy his prey;
She saw that destiny had spun the net,
She knew the lights were dim'd the stage was set;
She saw the players moving to and fro—
All this, and more Cassandra did foreknow.
She did not cavil, nor yet question 'why?'—
The stars do not prevaricate nor lie.
She saw joy driv'n to exile on that day—

And still the exile sings on yonder spray;
For happiness has oft times fragile wings,
But joy depends not on external things.

Unhappy captive! born beneath a star,
Ill-omened as the furies that wage war;
O cease to thrash your wings, for naught is gained
Rebelling at the fate the stars ordained.
Why fret because the nest was lined with rue?—
Oft beauty changes old disguise for new;
And sorrow sometimes dons attire as fair
As lilies blooming in their native air.

You were impatient, and your eager wings
Full early spurn'd the bough where joy now sings:
Already on yon dancing, moonlit spray
Unfold the petals of oncoming day.
In rosy cassock now, the day's high priest
Peers thro' the mullion'd windows of the east.
To-morrow's buds are hidden 'neath the leaves,
And summer's hoarded gold and silver sheaves
Are piled breast-high on Ceres' threshing floor,
And dribbling golden grain beneath her door.

On the horizon where the night-hawk drinks,
The grey-coif'd dawn has snap'd the silver links
In morning's iridescent rosary.
And set the rainbow-beaded globules free—
Turquoise and sapphire, ruby, pearl and gold,
Slipping between her nerveless fingers' hold—
A spate of flashing gems is streaming by,
Rolling at random down the cloister'd sky.

. . . . .

The noonday sun has reached its zenith now:
The exile sings no more on yonder bough.
To shadier thickets he has now withdrawn,
For twilight is oft lovelier than dawn . . .

The dim horizon swims in golden haze,
The cattle in the pastures cease to graze,

The parch'd fields wilt beneath the blazing sun,
And panting partridges to shelter run.
The fox, with lolling tongue, limps to his lair,
And midges swarm on shafts of dizzy air;
Too cloying is this clover-scented breeze
With droning of intoxicated bees;
The babbling brooks are beck'ning you to drink
Where cows knee-deep in crystal waters sink—
You pine to splash your wings in sparkling rills,
That rush and foam and tumble down the hills.

. . . . .

The sinking sun is crimsoning the trees
As prostrate twilight rises from her knees,
Before the altar of the infinite,
Where secretly and silently the night
Is threading morning's rosary anew,
While heav'n distils cool iridescent dew.
She softly slips a bead as evening falls,
And from the forest dim a late bird calls—
Now, one by one, her acolytes arise
And swing their golden censers in the skies;
For still the steadfast stars from pole to pole,
Maintain their laws and destinies control.

The clouds are massing over yonder hills,
But heav'n no cool, sweet dew for you distils . . .
The darkness deepens where the shadows fall,
And night folds over all her heavy pall . . .

The martial clouds are blindfolding the stars,
And furies wage fierce, elemental wars—
Their silver lances flash as they go by;
Thund'ring along the frontiers of the sky.
The steely blades mow down the quaking grass,
And saplings bow before them as they pass . . .

More threat'ning grow the skies beneath their pall—
There is no moon . . . no stars . . . no light at all.
The darkest hour precedes the dawn of day—
The Pale Deliverer is on his way!

O captive spirit, fold your wings and rest:
Time's broken shell is crumbling in the nest:
Before the fowler makes his rounds at dawn,
To dim Elysian shades you will have flown.

EDITH M. WALKER.

SKY PICTURE

A MASTERPIECE, hung high,
Is lithographed upon the afterglow
Of a waning sky.
Seen from the vale below:

Trees pruned by the wind—sentinels,
A crumbling cabin—soldiers sleeping,
A tumbling fireplace—a maiden peeping,
Two window sockets—watching eyes,
Bent forms with bulging pockets—cunning spies,
Wheels of an upturned cart, a sagging pump,
Its handle and a stump—bicycles,
Escaping rebels.

Life, breath, beauty out of stark death!

CAROLINE D'AGUILAR HENDERSON.

REDEMPTION

REVERENTLY, to Beauty's high white shrine
We come to thank whatever gods there be
For all things that are lovely—scent of pine,
Warmth of fine sand, coolness of chestnut tree;
The hourly magic of the changing skies,
The quiet strength of valley and of hill—
We who have looked on life with happy eyes,
How shall we meet with death, most strange and still?

Death—oh, a powerless thing! Pityingly
The gods looked down on our bewildered fear
Of darkness and of space, then gloriously
Blazoned our path with love, a radiance clear.
Sadly we turn from life, but tranquilly,
Finding in love our immortality.

B. F. PARGITER.

STORY OF A PILGRIMAGE

THE *Collected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (Faber), arranged, as every poet's collected work should be, in chronological order, provide a record of one of the most interesting, perhaps also one of the most significant, pilgrimages in the history of poetry. In the early poems there is all the sordid imagery, the pessimism, disillusionment and disgust that accounts for Mr. Eliot's reputation as an " unpleasant " poet, accounts also for the irritating preoccupation with rats, sewers, gasworks and similar themes in the work of his followers. These early poems are undeniably repellent; the poet is sick of an overmastering spiritual and emotional nausea, and can only find relief in the type of imagery in which the poetry abounds. It is a common psychological experience. One poem alone preceding *The Waste Land*, *La Figlia Che Piange*, is free of the taint, and in *The Waste Land* itself the horror has worked itself to a climax. The poem is the inevitable and logical culmination, and the writing of it was probably the poet's salvation. Much has been written of it, much may still be written, but there can be no ultimate rational " explanation" of a work swinging so perilously on the balance of madness and sanity, the overflow of a mind ready to snap under the tension of extreme pain. It is obscure, erudite, chaotic and over-allusive, but as an expression of a fine mind in travail could scarcely be otherwise. The antagonism it has aroused has been due not only to misunderstanding of the poem itself (which is pardonable!) but clearly to a still more fundamental misunderstanding of its inner significance. The notes at the end tend rather to deepen than to clarify the obscurity. As always with poetry, the poem to be understood at all must be received in its totality, with flexible receptivity to its quality and essence, then, after several re-readings, the key to the riddle may be found. The intellectual approach alone is of little use.

Followers of Mr. Eliot are often wilfully obscure, confusing obscurity of diction with depth of thought until obscurity becomes absurdity, and betrays, not profundity, but often inefficiency and mental laziness. *The Waste Land* is never wilfully obscure, but it is inevitably chaotic.

The poetry is often vivid and powerful, and there are even faint echoes of the romantic feeling found hitherto only in *La Figlia Che Piange* and here and there in *Prufrock* and *Portrait of a Lady*. *The Waste Land* contains also one of Mr. Eliot's loveliest lines: "Looking into the heart of light, the silence."

The Hollow Men, published three years later, suggests that the danger-point is passed, that the writing of *The Waste Land* was the necessary crisis. Despite the nightmare-quality still overshadowing the poem there are echoes of beauty:

> "Sunlight on a broken column . . .
> . . . a tree swinging
> And voices are
> In the wind's singing
> More distant and more solemn
> Than a fading star."

There are flashes of hope, and tentative, though chaotic, incursions of the religious thought that is the ultimate salvation.

Ash Wednesday, not published until five years later, is the true transition-poem, admittedly religious, yet there is still exhaustion and doubt, though not a trace of the sordidness of the early work and of *The Waste Land*:

> "Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope
> Because I do not hope to turn
> Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope
> I no longer strive, to strive towards such things
> (Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?) . . .
>
> Because I do not hope to know again
> The infirm glory of the positive hour . . .
>
> Because I cannot drink
> There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is nothing
> again . . .
>
> Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something
> Upon which to rejoice."

This is the last conclusion of the man who has suffered too much: "consequently I rejoice, having to construct something upon which to rejoice." The only other solution is death, the coward's way:

> " And pray to God to have mercy upon us
> And I pray that I may forget
> These matters that with myself I too much discuss
> Too much explain . . .
> May the judgment not be too heavy upon us."

In the exquisite references to the " silent sister veiled in blue and white," the " blessed sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain, spirit of the garden," and in the reaching-out towards religious truth it is clear that the worst of the struggle is over. "The eternal paradoxes of religion offer a conclusion to all that is inconclusible " :

> " Teach us to care and not to care,
> Teach us to sit still
> Even among these rocks,
> Our peace in His will."

So

> " the lost heart stiffens and rejoices
> In the lost lilac and the lost sea-voices."

These thoughts of religious acceptance are recurrent in all the later work, and reach their culmination in the poetic drama *Murder in the Cathedral* (not included in this volume), wherein the theme is finally crystallized in Becket's conflict.

After the appearance of *Ash Wednesday*, there is only one, and this a very enigmatic, relapse: the short " melodrama " *Sweeney Agonistes*, where the unnecessary exaltation of the commonplace recalls some of the passages in *The Waste Land* but lacks any of the poem's greatness. It is not easy to find universal significance in the reactions of two very ordinary prostitutes and their still more ordinary men-friends to the problems of life and death. With this exception, all the poems following on *Ash Wednesday* lead towards the triumphant asseveration of Christianity in the choruses from *The Rock*:

> " . . . man without God is a seed upon the wind; driven this way and that, and finding no place of lodgment and germination. . . .
>
> O Father we welcome your words,
> And we will take heart for the future

Remembering the past . . .
. . . nothing is impossible, nothing
To men of faith and conviction.
Let us therefore make perfect our will.

Twelve years after *The Waste Land*—*The Rock*. The foundations are at last well and truly laid.

Mr. Eliot has not been a prolific poet; the thought inherent in his work can only be expressed in a condensed form, and then with great difficulty. He will therefore always be a difficult poet, though no longer obscure. His diction has simplified mainly, it may easily be assumed, because he has now something important to say, and such writers are inevitably concerned to convey their message intelligibly. He is a master of paradox, because he deals with truths beyond rational explanation which can only be expressed in paradox; for example the beautiful passage in *Ash Wednesday*:

"Lady of silences
Calm and distressed
Torn and most whole
Rose of memory
Rose of forgetfulness
Exhausted and life-giving
Worried reposeful.
. . .
Terminate torment
Of love unsatisfied
The greater torment
Of love satisfied
End of the endless
Journey to no end. . . ."

And in the final poem *Burnt Norton* he revolves the problem of time,—torment of the poet,—the philosopher, in ceaseless paradox:

"Time present and time past
Are both perhaps in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

"What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.

. . .

But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden
The moment in the arbour when the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time is time conquered."

" Only in time can the moment . . . be remembered " ; the torment of the poet, the philosopher, the lover. The rigid economy of diction, brought to perfection by Mr. Eliot and imitated with disastrous results by his followers, achieves in this poem an almost unendurable poignancy.

The progress from *The Waste Land* to the final poems is not wholly surprising ; in a poem so stark with horror a realization of the Kingdom of God is inherent, without such a realization the peculiar quality of horror and revulsion would be lacking. It seems that the pilgrimage is ended, and there is peace, but a serenity paradoxically stressful, " worried reposeful " the blessedness of Christianity which is beyond happiness and inevitably includes the Cross.

DALLAS KENMARE.

AS THEY RODE PAST MY WINDOW

WHAT do they think, the broken men by the wayside?
What do they think when Moloch rides again,
Shaking his bridle, tintinnabulating,
Harness and baggage and horses and guns again ?

" Ha, you ride out—you ride, all out, in the morning—
Ride over frontiers and dying and forts overthrown—
Say, have you met him yet, the Man on the pale horse,
Who rides down victor and vanquished, alike his own ?

" Who has flung us here, faceless and legless and writhing
(Yes, when the splints and the linen have done their best).
Who will leave you there, on the field laid flat by his
scything,
Or spare you a tattered doll for a woman's breast."

REDCLIFFE McKIE.

OUT OF SIGHT

WHEN ardour yields its final word
In praise of some fair face,
Does there remain an unseen grace,
A music yet unheard,
Beyond the beauty of the hour?

Will love itself but fail to find
The greatest gift of all?
The thought that halts not within call,
The majesty of mind
That needs no evidence of power?

Can worship ever reach the height
Of that for which it gropes?
The wonder beyond human hopes,
The god-head out of sight,
Granting the seed within the flower?

IËRNE ORMSBY.

NIGHT

NOTHING above me but the lone dark,
Remote towers of silence
And the stars.
Now are the creases of my mind
Made smooth;
My wordless questionings are mute,
As night,
Without a sound, a sigh,
Gathers tired earth to her sphere.
And so,
On the folds of her solitude I lie—
A nameless unit among infinite realities—
And muse and dream
Beneath her untroubled eyes,
And dreaming . . . sleep.

YVONNE WINGFIELD KING.

PREFACE TO A READING

LET us confess, we—the little group of poets and lovers of poetry gathered here to-day[1]—that a more inauspicious time, a more difficult and dangerous time for the art we love and practise could not well be imagined. We find ourselves, not in a period of awakening hopes, amid the opening blossoms of dreams, as did the poets of those great ages of Poetry whose impassioned epic and lyric utterances have been handed down to us as a glorious heritage: not in a period of splendid achievement and lordly enterprise, as did the poets of those, also, great poetic days, which peopled stage and story with characters whose voices still talk to us down the centuries; we live, not in a young age of hope, nor in a mighty age of intellectual and spiritual manhood; but in an old, worn and weary age of woeful decadence,—an age which has—as is the way with ages of decadence—grown brutal and bestial from intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual impotence. One after another, the great nations of Europe are throwing aside their birthrights of culture and humanity, and are progressively reverting to barbarism. Of every civilization the decadent stage directly precedes a reversion to the savage state.

We live under the ever increasing dread of impending disaster. The iron wings of the birds of death drone in our apprehensive ears. We dare not look upward; we dare not look forward; there is little light left to look around us in streets clogged with the roaring rubbish of mechanical materialism. Is it to be wondered at if poets are rare and poetry rarer in such times as these? Yet the poetic instinct, which is as old as mankind itself, is not dead in man—nor ever will be—and despite the gloom of gathering danger, and above the senseless din of machinery, Poetry might yet make its voice heard,—a trumpet's voice, a siren's voice, a nightingale's voice,—were it not for the unhappy, the shameful fact, that poetry (like art) has been in these latter days false to itself. We have seen in our times *La Trahison*

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[1] A reading by Mr. Cammell of his poem, "The Triumph of Beauty," on December 2nd, 1936—one of the weekly series of readings from new volumes of distinction at 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

des Clercs, and we have seen a thing that is still worse,—the " Treason of the Poets."

This is not the time—although this is *assuredly* the place—to lay before you my views on what is very foolishly called the " modern " movement in poetry ; I will only say here that the self-styled " modern poets " have come to fill me with indignation and disgust. They have especially aroused my indignation and disgust, not because they have denied the gods, not because they have despised the bards and seers and sages of ten thousand years, not because they are manifestly pretentious people of little wit and less wisdom, not because they think foolishly and write feebly, but because they have deliberately, shamelessly dragged the honoured name, the holy name of " poet " in the dust ; because they have made the most honourable, and the most greatly honoured, of all titles, and all professions, a thing for the vulgar to mock at and the wise to ignore and the good to shun.

These people have done for Poetry what daubers in paint and muddlers with clay have done for the arts of painting and sculpture. Their absurdities, their incompetence, their insolent assumption of an office to which they were never as much as apprenticed, their obscenities, have discredited Poetry—the Language of the gods—in the eyes of the whole world and have caused the poet, *the Laurel-crowned of the Ages*, to be despised and rejected of men, as never before in the immeasurable history of man was he despised and rejected—neither at the dawn, nor in the even of any civilization—no, nor yet in the dark night of the most barbarous ages. These pretenders to the poet's name—these *sham poets*—have driven the naïades from their silver streams and hamadryad from her holy wood.

Yet in these plague-stricken days of poetic debasement there is a refuge, a sanctuary, to which we, who are faithful to the cult of the Muses worshipped by our forefathers, may betake us—a sanctuary from which neither the obloquy into which the traitors from the cause have brought us, nor the bellowing of dictators, nor the noisy ruffianism of the machine-mad caveman, can debar us. Like the little group of Florentine ladies and gentlemen who in the darkest days of the Middle Ages, when death by pestilence walked the streets of the City of Flowers, used to meet in a garden and there discourse sweetly and pleasantly of sweet and pleasant things, till what time death should demand them, or destiny deliver them, so may we in little groups and societies of friendship, forgather whenever and wherever we please, and together entertain an afternoon or evening with the spiritual wine of Poesy.

CHARLES RICHARD CAMMELL.

TO RUDYARD KIPLING

BROTHER, the night was dark,
threatening black the sky,
seeking his way to the rock of faith
a lonely wanderer went by.

Weary from seeking in vain,
tired from the chains of law,
I, the wanderer in darkness,
lifted my head and saw,

saw with wondering eyes
the sought and promised land,
and a lonely man on the rock of faith,
a flaming torch in his hand.

Brother, oh, lift your torch
high in the threatening night,
that men, who were lost, may find their way,
led by its beaming light.

ALFRED HOLM LAURSEN

[Mr. Laursen is a member of The Poetry Society whose published works have won him a name among Danish poets. He has always been very interested in English literature, Kipling being his favourite author. In thankfulness for what he owes to that great writer he wrote a memorial poem in English to him. It was published in the *Kipling Journal* and he was selected the first honorary member of the Kipling Society. This recognition encouraged Mr. Laursen to continue writing verse in the language he had learned to love almost as dearly as his mother tongue and we have pleasure in publishing his second Kipling poem. —ED.]

FAREWELL TO TREES

Trees I have loved too much, have watched too lovingly, too long—
trees have grown into myself . . .
There have been springs when I could not leave the beech-trees
because of my love for the slow, sure unfolding of the pointed buds,
the shedding of the frail brown sheaths, the spreading of the little green fans,
and at last the silken, downy texture of the delicate leaves ;
I have watched them coarsen and darken, change to copper, grow brittle, and fall.
As for the chestnuts—all winter through I have watched the sticky brown buds,
their swelling in March, the gradual opening, the miracle of the small flower-cluster sheltered by listless young leaves,
have watched them grow in strength till blossoming candelabra stood erect among the outspread foliage,
and at last have seen the gold flame of autumn kindling the boughs . . .
Silver-birches, larches, poplars—rain-whispering, light-shimmering poplars—
too much I have loved them all, their spring poise and dance, and their mature autumn brooding ;
oaks, pines, dense elms, and golden-haired willows—I have loved them all, even their names,
so now I must turn from them, having loved too much,
and in a brilliant new world look no longer on English flowers, on English trees,
forget all that is too inwoven with pain, the beauty of pain, and the pain of beauty,
turn to hectic glittering streets, and the silver, blue and gold glamour of the towers of the New World,
watch from the vast heights of the blue and golden towers sunsets over the Hudson River,
see the busy heartless city kindly enfolded in hyacinth-blue mist,
and forget in the enchantment of a million lights flashing and flowing far below in the blue dusk
the too-intimate loveliness and pain of distant English trees.

New York, 1936. DALLAS KENMARE.

Mr. W. B. Yeats ended a broadcast lecture on " Modern Poetry " by pertinently pointing out that to " read a poem like prose, that hearers unaccustomed to poetry may find it easy to understand, is to turn it into bad, florid prose. If anybody reads or recites poetry as if it were prose from some public platform, I ask you, speaking for poets, living, dead or unborn, to protest in whatever way occurs to your perhaps youthful minds ; if they recite or read by wireless, I ask you to express your indignation by letter. William Morris, coming out of a hall where somebody had read or recited his ' Sigard the Volsung ' said : ' It cost me a lot of damned hard work to get that thing into verse'."

CLEOPATRA

"When she first met Mark Antony, she pursed up his heart upon the river of Cydnus."—ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

WHERE the wild monkey swings,
Parakettes perch and plume their wings,
And lizards lie
Aping the wild chameleon's wizardry,
Quivering-fingered
Light gilded paths where Cleopatra lingered,
Whereon the doves
Strutted like burnished cocks before their loves;
The brazen sun
On Cleopatra shone,
Painted her black hair red, with brushes bold,
Her robe cerise, rose pink and marigold.

But the sun filtering through
Wrestling entanglements of yew,
Way could not find
In the sad groves of Cleopatra's mind,
The sun sprites dancing,
Caparisoned like bell-hung palfreys prancing,
Childish seemed
To one who palely dreamed
Of alien Rome,
And Antony at home
Octavia-cherished by the Tiber side,
The while his earlier love fell sick and died.

And then he came, he came,
Heralded by his gilded name!
How cymbals rang,
How Charmian praised, Alexis sang!
Then no more fasting,
But feasts the noon, the eve and night outlasting,
Turkeys and venison,
Peaches of heavenly benison,
Wines Portuguese,
Fish from the deep seas,
Peacocks, and curious sweets from Mandalay,
And fruits close-gobletted from rich Cathay.

Oh! life was sweet to both!
To tarry here they were not loth,
Loving their world of joys,
Bejewelled with beguiling toys;
But who could blame
The chosen of the world for flying shame?—

Proud Rome applauded,
The steel-faced legions lauded,
Triumphant peals
For Caesar's chariot wheels,
Then Cleopatra, the degraded Queen,
Antony captive where he crowned had been!

So she was robed in flowers,
Re-sceptred with her queenly powers,
As she might make
Death walk with modest footsteps in her wake;
And then the asp
And the long opiate of the venomous clasp,
Sleeping, and dreaming
Of river water gleaming,
Of purple barge,
Flowered shores, and a green marge,
And Antony, accoutred in new pride,
Waiting to greet her by the Cydnus side.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

BEREFT

ALL you who have died,
Who left your message spilled upon the stones
In blood and shattered flesh and splintered bones—
You, so full of pride,
Who stumbled disillusioned through the mud
Of war, gaunt with pain, harried through the blood,
Flotsam on the tide—
Whose voices drowned amid the whine of shells,
Now in the silence speak again like bells,
Putting time aside—

You, who knew the shame
Of one another broken, and who wept
Upon the cross of shining honour kept,—
Know this, though you came
With bloodied wounds and shame filled souls again,
And men's lure was gold, all would be in vain:
Immolate—aflame—
Not e'en the pleading of your death-healed sores
Can purge Greed's altars of men's wars!

For peace you have died;
You wrote your will across men's minds in groans—
They traced your names upon memorial stones—
Wept, and turned aside.

MURIEL CRIGHTON.

PAINTINGS FROM AN INKWELL

I USE my pen like a brush and paint
Word pictures and blackouts for art critics
With microscopic eyes, so—

This weather-blurred wharf will soon be black
When moon becomes dead, lifeless in the skies,
Sagging out of sight. The soft slap of sea
Sounds against old harbour bars, and clouds
Part reluctantly. Breakers toss their white arms
Against purple night, singing shadows. . . .

Now dawn with tangled hair rises from her bed
In the sea, then, fully awake, flashes her mantilla
Of fire across the sky and clicks her Spanish heels.

Day ends, sea and sky meet in a clean straight line
And clouds are burned at the edges. . . .

Some would have me do ink sketches only,
Ladies that are soft eyed cheaters, heroes
Hairy chested, boldly put. But I who am
A fugitive in verse go at random where I will,
Escaping loneliness. . . . All this time
I have not stirred from my desk
That is a desert where only the telephone
Droops like a single coco-nut tree
Over an inkwell oasis.

ISOBEL STONE.

TO COLERIDGE

THY theory that the mind itself creates
The universe around us, all abates
The leaping steeds that should have borne thy soul
From out this clouded globe above the Pole.
This, this, drains dry the wells of love
That water'd thee. No emerald dove
Of the Holy Spirit from a wood
Alights on thee baptisèd in the flood.
No glistering sunbeam nor an aureole
Of crown'd magnificence. Nor is the soul
Suck'd from thee by the whirlpool or cascade
Streaming from Parnass rocks ; nor in the glade
Of Parnes the immortal sisters nine
Visit not thee, nor Iris' colour'd shrine.
No lightning smites thee, nor affrights,
Riving the silken chrysalis of thought,
Nor is the levin wrought
To shatter the bubble of azure, from the soap

Of metaphysics blown from the porcelain bowl.
No, wrapt round in the tissues subtly spun
From the pearly cells of thine own brain, the amethystine
Murex-dyed sleeping chrysalid,
Thou swayest cradled, though the Norns forbid,
By that thin thread of fantasy that is thine,
Thy own bowels' weaving, suspended in the forest
Of ancient Night and poisonous orchids of dreams,
And shalt hereafter, when the sunrise streams
From the labyrinth of Time, put forth a wing,
An immortal butterfly, a Psyche, scattering
The dews of melody, 'mid heaven's iaspid gleams.

T. E. Casson.

THE TEMPLE DANCING GIRL

YOU would not speak to me,
Shy, sunbeam-girdled darling of the gods
There in your vast-roofed home
On Haguro.

My Kaga words you found so strange,
Child of the north, so strange my outland guise.
I think, perchance, your eyes had never gazed
Into such eyes as mine.

The fat priests snored, and the pale acolytes
Drowsed on the balcony. High trees around
Were silent in the noontide, and your steps
Were like a whisper along the shining floor.

I would have spoken with you, seen your dance
Fill the dark temple-halls with images
Of things unknown, of tangling loveliness,
While throb of drum and anguish of thin flute
Quieted the quivering sun, the golden spears,
To an ecstatic hour of suspense,
Before the coming of those ancient ghosts
Your laughter chides.
You would not speak to me,

But flitted away shyly out of sight,
And left me to the snoring of the priests
There in your vast-roofed home
On Haguro.

Hyderabad, Deccan. E. E. Speight.

"IF NEGLECT CAN KILL."

"And ye, O living poets, who are dead
Though ye are living, if neglect can kill."

THESE words were written by Longfellow in the middle of the nineteenth century. They may have been true then; they are certainly true to-day. Our poets now accept with resignation, almost with an air of perverted pride, a sphere of contact with the people so limited that even the favoured names of the moment think they have done well if they achieve a circulation of a few hundred copies.

What is the reason for this strange disparity between the sales of poetry and the sales of other, even eclectic forms of literature? The tendency among the poets is to regard the cause as lying in the hearts of an evil and unspiritual generation which will not recognize authentic bread when it is offered. The theory is propounded by poets, both in speech and in writing, that they are living in advance of their times; that they have already attained heights of thought and of spiritual insight below which their fellows are still painfully toiling; and that in these circumstances immediate recognition can hardly be expected. But the time, of course, will come.

The more obvious expedient of blaming the poets does not seem to occur so readily. I say that if a poet is out of touch with his fellow-men, that fact is his misfortune certainly, and probably his fault. Where is the fault in this case?

It lies, I think, in what may be called the cerebral quality of so much modern verse. Poets of the school which derives—or believes that it derives—from T. S. Eliot, are so concerned with avoiding the appearance of being derivative from either tradition or emotion, that they deliberately twist common speech to uncommon forms; and where there is conscious striving for calculated originality, sterility ensues; because artfulness replaces art. This seems to me to be the major fault in poets like Empson, MacNeice and Auden; and poets like Spender, Whistler and Cummings, in whom the true fire does indisputably burn, are not entirely free from the virus.

Poetry such as I have been discussing has been compared with a cross-word puzzle ; but this, I think, is hardly fair to the cross-word : there is much pleasure and excitement in working out a Torquemada of the true vintage. The plain fact is that, if poetry is to strike home to the hearts of men—and to no other poetry will they ever respond—something more than brain must go to its making—something which cannot be calculated ; something out of the heart of the poet ; some warmth to fire the brain's coldness ; some careless thing to balance the careful. This cannot be had for the seeking, and is the meaning of the statement that poets are born and not made. By much taking thought it is often destroyed ; by striving for effect, always.

So long as poets fail to exorcise this spirit of superficial cleverness, so long will their audience be of negligible size. Their task is to eliminate obscurity and achieve profundity—a very different thing. When the emotions of the heart are too powerfully inhibited by the control of the mind, the resultant poetry, however, difficult of comprehension, lacks real depth ; what should be an illuminating fire becomes a mere surface glitter, a phosphorescence which may stimulate but does not satisfy. There may be room in the scheme of things for one poet of Arctic temperature and septentrional brilliance: we have one, and he is supremely successful ; but more are not required, and it would be a happier world if that fact were clearly recognized.

The worst result of all this is that poetry has now come into such disrepute among people in general that even those poets whose work is both lovely and profound attract a much smaller audience than is their due, poets like Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, Roy Campbell to name only three out of many, who, in addition to wit, have depth and the power to stir the heart, so that we remember them beyond the momentary admiration. Perhaps one or two examples will make this clearer than attempted description. We will have first a selection from Mr. William Empson's *Doctrinal Point*.

Professor Eddington with the same insolence
Called all physics one tautology ;

If you describe things with the right tensors
All law becomes the fact that they can be described with them ;
This is the Assumption of the description.
The duality of choice thus becomes the singularity of existence ;
The effort of virtue the unconsciousness of fore-knowledge.

That over-all that Solomon should wear
Gives these no cope who cannot know of care.
They have no gap to spare that they should share
The rare calyx we stare at in despair.
They have no other that they should compare.
Their arch of promise the wide Heaviside layer
They rise above a vault into the air.

Now that on the whole is good, not without faults : the atrociously jingling internal rhymes in the last verse, the odd dragging in of the Heaviside layer—as though the poet had just heard of it and was very pleased to pass on his knowledge—these and other minor defects are there. But good on the whole, because Empson has something to say and can say it. But then—does it stir you at all ? And you ask why poetry ; why not prose ? Prose would have done this job better, as it does all purely *thinking* things. And to all poetry of this type, ninety-eight per cent. of the people will say—So what ? and turn to something with blood in it—or if not blood, then tears.

I will show a piece with fire that is blood, in it ; and then a piece with tears—this latter kind being rarer when real.

Here is fire from Ezra Pound :

The light became her grace and dwelt among
Blind eyes and shadows that are formed of men ;
Lo, how the light doth melt us into song :

The broken sunlight for a helm she beareth
Who hath my heart in jurisdiction.
In wild-wood never fawn nor fallow fareth
So silent light ; no gossamer is spun
So delicate as she is, when the sun
Drives the clear emeralds from the bended grasses,
Lest they should parch too swiftly, where she passes.

Only a magician in his art could have transmuted words to the last line but one; I refrain from commenting on this line, because everyone—and particularly every poet—

should reflect about it until he clearly sees why it is not poetry but magic, thus to pyrotechnicate the coldness of dawn.

Now as a closing example one of the sonnets—magnificent, though apparently irregular—of the American poet, E. E. Cummings:

O thou to whom the musical white spring

offers her lily inextinguishable,
taught by thy tremendous grace bravely to fling,

Implacable death's mysteriously sable
from her redolent shoulders,
                                        Thou from whose
feet reincarnate song suddenly leaping
flame-flung mounts, inimitably to lose
herself where the wet stars softly are keeping

their exquisite dreams—O Love ! upon thy dim
shrine of intangible commemoration,
(from whose faint close as some grave languorous hymn
pledged to illimitable dissipation
unhurried clouds of incense fleetly roll)

i spill my bright incalculable soul.

Consider this sonnet ; one of sixteen, all very beautiful. Pass by typographical eccentricities, the smudged rhythm here and there, the bisection of the couplet, all small defects. Does this sonnet stir you—deeply, with the sense of something new, something rich and strange, something terrible almost in its depth, its reality ? If it does not, I should be sorry, but there can be no arguing it into doing so. For the great majority of poetry readers, I believe that it will ; and that while poetry like this is being written here and there, if ever so seldom, time will not wear it down, nor neglect for long despoil.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

A timely and pathetic tribute is *King George V Commemoration Book of Verse* (Stockwell) containing the work of many authors (among them Irene Brittain Bell, Marianne Hipkins, T. Pittaway), which is of remarkably uneven quality. Some of the poems here are good, beyond the standard of usual " set " tributes ; some quite the reverse.

LEAVING SZECHWAN

RED the fields of Szechwan,
Heavy my heart that I must leave them.
I am called away to the Capital,
The Son of Heaven needs my skill
To pen his decrees and memorials.
O why did I learn the Hundred Best Characters,
Why was I not born a coolie, a labourer,
I would then never leave Szechwan.
(Yet how joyful was I that day
My Father brought me Po Chii-i’s great verse :
Po Chii-i, who made me a poet.)
Swift rushes Min River,
To-day I embark for the Capital.
Swifter and heavier tears gush from my heart,
So saddened and weighed down in sorrow.
My Mother weeps silently,
My Father too, is silent, his face overcast.
He brings me a pen-case,
Bought three winters gone, of a trader ;
Now he places it in my hand, his parting gift.
My Mother has quilted silks and padded coats for me,
Against the cold of the Capital.
My sister puts something wrapped in silk, in my hand :
And flees to my Mother’s arms, weeping as though her heart would break.
It is an ink-tablet, jasmine-scented,
Inscribed with Li Po’s lines on leaving Szechwan.
(Ah Master ! no flute will comfort me in parting from Szechwan)
The servants bring a parrot in a bamboo cage,
Which can recite verses of Lo T’ien.
The boatmen call : “ Master, make haste ”;
I bow to my Father, then to my Mother, to my sister,
Who takes a last embrace, her tears mingle with mine,
I board the boat, taking a last look at the fields,
Gardens and the house where I first saw light.
The boatmen respect me for my Father’s sake ;
Their Captain bows low before me.
They will return soon to Szechwan ;
But I ? When will I return ?
“ Aie Yah ! ” “ Aie Yah ! ” the boatmen cry,
Casting off ropes, hoisting sail ;
Blurred and dim through my tears,
The red fields glimmer, beloved Szechwan, I go !
Painted in my heart are your gardens,
Even as the Yellow Springs will I recall you,
Land of my birth and youthful years.
The boat rushes downstream,

Borne as light as a migrant goose on Autumn's wind.
The Captain comes, bowing low:
" Master, we have heard you are a poet,
Come, give vent to your grief,
Sing of our pleasant Szechwan."
Sadly I smile, shaking my head;
But soon I assent,
Voicing my grief in praising Szechwan.

DAVID MORGAN.

A THRUSH IN DUBLIN

THE Trumpeter of the triumphant Spring
Is here in Stephen's Green!
I heard him shrilling from a topmost bough,
A fanfare clear and keen,
Last night, when May showers fell,
When dusk dropped down, and over everything
Blue vapours cast a spell.

He trilled as though the quiet Wicklow woods
Were deep about him; and the roaring floods
Of glittering traffic were but mountain streams
In that sweet place of dreams;
Safe in his sanctuary of bird-delight,
His Paradise, apart,
Within the City's heart,
Where through the noisy, many-jewelled night,
Dublin, deliriously gay,
Speeds after pleasure down the shining way.

Since, exquisitely, in an English vale
John Keats invoked the passionate nightingale,
Immortal, too, our Irish thrush had been
Had Dublin known the Poet, slim and pale,
Of visionary eye, and gentle mien;
Could he have passed this way
In solitude, one day,
Among the fields that now are Stephen's Green!
Entranced the world had waited, while he told
The meaning of those notes of liquid gold,
Which, all along the years,
Still stir the spirit to the verge of tears—
The Spring-time Voice of Ireland, pealing there
In Stephen's Green, heart of a City Square!

MARGARET E. STRINGER.

THE LOVER WOULD SING OF HIS BELOVED

I SAID " I will make one song that earth shall have
Something of her loveliness to keep,
And say of time that lays all beauty in the grave,
' He gave her body sleep,
But her spirit is too strong for time to touch ;
For one who loved her made this song for her,
Nor is there song made lovelier ;
He loved her loveliness so much '."

I said, " I will make one song " . . . but could not sing,
For I was only a dreamer and frailly made,
Though my heart was sick with desiring
To accomplish what I said.
The world is a world of images,
But womanliness still dwells apart,
Nor all the beauty of this, and this,
Can serve where her lovely body is,
Or the dreams of her dreaming heart.

" She is one of the loveliest ladies God has made.
I can say no more than this," I said.

RAYMOND MURRAY.

JUSTIFICATION

THIS is the beauty,
That in the midst of this rubbish heap
Of men and things ; in this England
With its scattered houses and littered landscapes
And dwarfed generations,
I have found two flowers.

One, my sister, lay early under the winding sheet
In the Welsh twilight of that flowered room
The folds were grey ; she was like Greek marble.
The death chamber, level with the mountains
Held her head symbolically high,
There was no bed, no walls, or so it seemed,
She lay suspended in the air,
Sleeping like a god. Her limbs were large.
She made movement seem slow, speech primitive,
And the mass of mankind embryonic.
Her drained lips made blood seem cold, as white heat
Compared with red. Ecstasy informed their curves.
She had died with the touch of inspiration
Still upon them. Blake died so
And for a time even the soil of the graveyard
Was printed with that kiss.

The other I saw walking in the cornfields,
Sniffing the air with eager nostrils
Moving his head from side to side,
Responding to stimuli. The summer evening air
Was thick with sound. Birds singing, machinery
Muffled by distance and the innumerable
Fidgetings of insects and of flowers
He was higher than the corn but shaped like it,
Swayed like it. Erect with its firmness,
Pliable with its grace. His is the flower I love
And the fruit I will know.

This is the beauty,
That in the midst of this rubbish heap
Of men and things
I have found two flowers.

They justify the existence
Of the human race.

M. E. Mitchell.

UNTO OURSELVES

WE are the lovers, aching for loving.
At our side we hear the silken catch of sighing,
We seek it and we find . . .
An echo.

We are the lost ones, conquered by the Desert.
From afar we see inviting arms of trees,
But we find no refuge . . .
Only the sand.

We are the sand, the little grains of sand,
Blown to a cloud that rises suffocating.
In ones and twos by chance
We fall together.

We are the Drunkards, debauched by our own Ego.
So long have we thirsted beside a sterile river
That, sucking dry stones,
We faint.

Let us drink, our stream is drying ;
Let us sing, our cadence dying ;
Let us love, our moment is passing. . . .
And the day dawns dark.

E. H. G. Dobby:

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXIV

Poet and editor, and author of *The Thinker and Other Poems*, *Shadows on a Wall*, *The Lone Adventurer*, *The Enduring Flame*, *Songs of the Redwoods*, *The Merry Hunt and Other Poems*, *Modern American Lyrics*, *Modern British Lyrics*, and five prose volumes including *The Literary Revolution*; founder and editor of *Wings*, a Quarterly of Verse, Stanton A. Coblentz has won a distinguished place among the serious-minded and fastidious readers of to-day, who respect the great tradition of poetry, standing firmly against the bizarre. Coblentz is a fine balance in the shifting winds of this modern world. His new volume, *The Pageant of Man* (Wings Press) is an epic of man's present, past and future, a drama of civilization, over three hundred pages in length, told in poetry, possessed of a rare vitality. Mr. Coblentz at moments captures through the power of poetry authentic beauty. It is the age-old query that is set forth in these pages of whence, why and whither that arrests thinking men:

Not one of all the myriads seem to know
Whither the pathway turn beyond the bend.

* * *

Oh man, fierce hunter for the never-won,
Who learns not what to seek, nor where to find,
Who drives the madcap horses of the sun,
And hears their hoof-beats crash against his kind!
Oh man, a creature formed of lead and light,
The rose of morning, and the ink of night,
Would I might see you whole.

Mr. Coblentz employs, to carry his story, the dramatis-personae of the Banker, Promoter, Industrialist, grinding men, women and children beneath his feet at times, etc., and uses his medium with the boldness of a mind possessing a vivid vocabulary energized by the earnestness of an idealist, as instanced in the following fine credo:

Still let us live as if our hours have wrought
The fabric of the ages * * *
Thus, and thus only, can we hope to soar;
Thus, and thus only, can our lives attain
A rapture and a light unfelt before * * *
And thus, perhaps, still struggling, may we gain
A glimpse of some high purpose, shadow-barred,
Toward which all life must yearn and grope and strain,
And which, though trails be long and stones be hard,
Glows ever round our sight when skies are myriad-starred!

At moments *The Pageant of Man* recalls the graphic cinema of Wells' *The Shape of Things to Come*,—the mind staggering under the burden of our present difficulties seeks to foresee a brighter future, lighted by moral wisdom as well as the stupendous achievements of science.—

All hopes are bubbles, till a deed fulfilled!
All hopes are bubbles, but not all shall fade.

Editor of *A Poetic Viewpoint* and of *The American Poetry Journal*, whose "Laughter out of the Ground" was reviewed by our magazine in the May-June number, Robin Lampson has done a very interesting work in reviving the measure of the Terze-Rima Sonnet, which was immortalized by Dante, (The Archetype Press, Berkeley, California.) In the author's note we learn Sir Philip Sidney interpolated two terze-rima sonnets in his *Arcadia*, 1580–81. Shelley employed this rhyme-scheme in his *Ode to the West Wind* in 1819. Shelley wrote no sonnets, however, in this form. In Robert Frost's *West Running Brook*, 1928, one poem, "Acquainted With The Night," has the rhyme-scheme of aba-bcb-cdc-dad-aa, with the first and last line identical.

In a charming slim book, hand-set, of some fifty pages, Lampson gives us his enchanting revival of this ancient sonnet form. Mr. Lampson's sonnets are distinguished by a high and sensitive standard of beauty and expression, as in "Invocation":

> O perfect beauty, burn relentlessly
> Within my blood: a furnace make my heart,
> A crucible my brain. Thy pity be
>
> Only on purest feeling, highest art!
> All else consume! And let thy wrath's elation
> Suffer no dross to be a hidden part
>
> Within the sterling element's creation;
> But bid the phoenix of perfection rise
> Triumphant from thy ruthless conflagration!
>
> Or, sternest beauty, as the wind denies,
> At Monterey, peace to the cypress tree,—
> Strains, trims, and whips it till it agonize
>
> With Job's magnificent simplicity,—
> O strike and cleanse, exalt and chasten me!

And again in "Prayer For A Song":

> O god of poetry, who has bestowed
> Such wealth of song upon our English tongue,
> Freighting the British barque with lyric load:
>
> Well know I much already has been sung,
> Perhaps the noblest and the loveliest!
> I fear that you are surfeited among
>
> The harmonies of Milton and the zest
> Of Chaucer: you whose sapient ears have heard
> All Shakespeare's eloquence and all the blest

Enraptured cry of Keats; who have been stirred
By Shelley's unworldly song; warmed by the ire
Of Byron's blazonry . . . I fear my word

Can touch you not, though uttered with a fire
Kindled by pain and sorrow and desire.

A Further Range, by Robert Frost (Henry Holt and Co.) Author of *A Boy's Will*, *North of Boston*, *Mountain Interval*, *New Hampshire*, *West Running Brook*, *Selected Poems and Collected Poems*, brings further evidence of the rare quality and integrity of this poet's mind—serene in a world that is turbulent, thoughtful in a world overflowing with thoughtlessness, and balanced where there is so much confusion. Edwin Markham calls Frost " one of the half-dozen major planets in the American poetical firmament."

New England is immortalized in the poetry of this poet,—her gardens and flowers, her birds and harvests. " Desert Places," which follows, is an excellent example of the perfection of Frost's poetry:

Snow falling and night falling fast oh fast
In a field I looked into going past,
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs.
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less—
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars—on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

Beautiful is " Moon Compasses "; where the reader is completely carried by the emotion of the poet's concept:

I stole forth dimly in the dripping pause
Between two downpours to see what there was.
And a masked moon had spread down compass rays
To a cone mountain in the midnight haze,
As if the final estimate were hers,
And as it measured in her calipers,

The mountain stood exalted in its place.
So love will take between the hands a face . . .

"Build Soil—A Political Pastoral" tackles the present crisis of unrest. It is interesting to learn this poet's reaction to it. We quote:

The question is whether they've reached a depth
Of desperation that would warrant poetry's
Leaving love's alternations, joy and grief,
The weather's alternations, summer and winter,
Our age-long theme, for the uncertainty
Of judging who is a contemporary liar—
Who in particular, when all alike
Get called as much in clashes of ambition.
Life may be tragically bad, and I
Make bold to sing it so, but do I dare
Name names and tell you who by name is wicked?
Whittier's luck with Skipper Ireson awes me.
Many men's luck with Greatest Washington
(Who sat for Stuart's portrait, but who sat
Equally for the nation's Constitution).
I prefer to sing safely in the realm
Of types, composite and imagined people:
To affirm there is such a thing as evil
Personified, but ask to be excused
From saying on a jury "Here's the guilty."

* * *

Is Socialism needed, do you think?
We have it now. For Socialism is
An element in any government.
There's no such thing as Socialism pure—
Except as an abstraction of the mind.

* * *

Even while we talk some chemist at Columbia
Is stealthily contriving wool from jute
That when let loose upon the grazing world
Will put ten thousand farmers out of sheep.

* * *

—Steal away and stay away.
Don't join too many gangs. Join few if any.
Join the United States and join the family—
But not much in between unless a college.

Very level-headed are many of the reflections in this long poem. We will conclude by quoting the last eight lines, with its claim for the poet in "To A Thinker":

I own I never really warmed
To the reformer or reformed,

And yet conversion has its place
Not half way down the scale of grace.
So if you find you must repent
From side to side in argument,
At least don't use your mind too hard,
But trust my instinct—I'm a bard.

Hill Garden is Margaret Widdemer's first book of poems after her *Road To Downderry* of four years ago, which was reviewed in THE POETRY REVIEW, (Farrar and Rinehart). Poet and novelist, Margaret Widdemer has many volumes to her credit and many admirers in the reading world. In this, her latest volume of some 70 pages, the reader finds a number of delightful lyrics and several witty and pithy appreciations. Of this last genre, we give stanzas from " Modern Hymn For Grief " :

Luminal is what you take
For heartbreak.
That is all,
Except sometimes allonal
Or veronal.

Prayer was used, so we hear say,
In a sentimental day ;
You arose from kneeling, sure
God and you'd somehow endure.

But such gestures are for us,
One would say, ridiculous ;
Out of date
For the young sophisticate.

* * *

Now we have a drugstore god
With glass tubelets for His rod . . .

Three along your business day,
One the hour girls used to pray,
Count them for a rosary,
Three and one : one and three :
Luminal. Allonal, Veronal.
That is all.

Miss Widdemer's poem entitled " Happiness " is characteristic of her gift :

Happiness is not a ring,
Nor silk gowns sweeping
Backward on water-bright floors,
Nor love's wild laughing and weeping :

Happiness is a well
Of deep water, rising,
Clear and invisible, flooding all doors ;
Enwrapping ; surprising.

But if we learned this thing
While yet we were young
We would wait, too quiet, the exquisite bell
Deep in us rung ;

And no one would shake the world
And no one would storm the sky
Struggling hot-breathed after happiness,
Just gone by.

" Love is a Leaf," a charming song, follows :

Love is a leaf blowing,
   flying green, flying green,
Love is a brook flowing,
   no more heard, no more seen—

Love is a leaf falling,
   drifting down, drifting by—
Love is the whole world calling
   and the sea—and the sky.

Flutes in the Wind (Henry Harrison) is a second book from Ida Lillian Padelford. Her first *Who Seeks the Stars* was reviewed a year ago in THE POETRY REVIEW, and gave clear evidence of a sincere and sensitive talent in her gifted lyrics. This new volume marks growth and gives us a number of lovely poems.

Miss Padelford is a graduate of the University of Rochester, where she was class poet and director of the University's orchestra and was active in athletics. She has lectured widely on modern poetry.

We give " Invulnerable " :

In this whirling world
Your love is my axis steadying me.
Though all the spheres split asunder,
Yet shall I stand
Looking up for the whir of wings
Bringing the peace of God.

In answer to a letter of mine, about poetry, Miss Padelford sends us the following paragraphs :

> " My cry has always been and will be for sincerity and simplicity and naturalness in life, in poetry, in any creative undertaking. I can't help but feel that poetry to be of any real value must arise

from an emotional experience to be refined and shaped by the intellect and that ever reaching-out to greater truth and beauty. It is only then that intangible strength and inherent rhythm is sensed within it though one does not know why it pleases them so utterly upon the reading, and why he must go back to the poem again. Though I am but a child in poetry this belief seems to be the why of my writing it."

In the poetry of Miss Padelford, there is a decided note of mysticism as instanced in the following " On a Sanatorium Porch " :

Last night you left your bed against all orders
And took me in your arms
For I was too ill to hold back my tears.
You brushed the matted curls away from my forehead
And cooled my burning hands.
You drew me close to you
And held me on your breast.
I slept.
How can you ever know
My life that moment began?
And then, this noon
The nurse said
You died at dawn.

Resolved and gallant is " New Wings " :

From white ashes of defeat I am slowly rising,
Though grey from broken heart life quickens
To the wind.
Flowers revel boisterously
And birds dart with song bursting in their throats.
Above harsh winter night
The sky crackles with piercing stars.
From white ashes of defeat I am slowly rising
Out of petty snares
To try new wings.

Joseph Auslander's genius is an active force in the poetry of our generation, not only because of his own distinguished poetry but, through his guidance of poets in his Columbia University lectures, where he exercises an important and inspiring influence. In *More Than Bread* (The Macmillan Co.), a number of the poems concern themselves with the poet—as in " To The New Poets "—" To The Poets Who Fly Left "—" The Poet Pursues His Dream "—" Poet and Spider " and " I Am Poetry." Descriptive of the compelling urge that besets the poets, is the last telling stanza in his poem " To The New Poets " :

We only know the singing must be made
Out of our common grief,

As pure as light, as palpable as shade,
As definite as fruit or falling leaf;
We only know that on our hearts at length is laid
That song, and it is brief.

Excellent is " To The Poets Who Fly Left." It follows:

They fret, they sweat, they frown,
Insist that so we do;
They shout Catullus down,
Shout Keats down, too.

They sneer, they howl, they snort,
Insist that so we sing;
Yet Frost can still report
The snow, the spring.

They stamp, they gnash, they bray,
They madden and they mock;
The Hawk of Monterey
Still reads his rock.

From " The Poet Pursues His Dream," we quote the last two stanzas:

The poet stalks his heart
Like a wild bird hiding,
Until he hears, with a start,
Great wings riding.

Mocked by that harsh whirring,
Fouled with the swamps' mire,
He turns to find his heart purring
By his own hearthfire!

A royal claim is made for poetry in the last poem of some six pages which opens:

I am Poetry.
I am as old as yesterday.
I am as young as to-morrow.
I am the servant of anguish.
I am the antidote to despair.
I am the greyness of grief.
I am the green of hope.
I am the vessel of courage.
I am the hunger for God.

Beautiful is a short poem entitled " Thoughts ":

Thoughts move in the mind
Like birds moving in air:
Some hop, and some are too heavy,
Too heavy to bear.
And one thought buries its beak
Deep in the warmth of the mind;

And one is afraid to speak;
And one is blind.

And one is forever shaken
By the world's noise and smoke;
And one will never awaken
The heart it broke.

We give in its entirety a stirring tribute, paid by this poet to A. E. Housman: " They told me, Heraclitus . . ."

More than a poet passes
Out of the world of words,
Out of men's griefs and grasses,
Rain and bells and the birds:

A savage grace like satin
That gloves the panther's nail;
The pumice of pure Latin
To edge the English flail;

As classic and as cleric
As Horace when he sups;
As bibulous as Herrick
Drowned in his honeyed cups.

Not in our raucous time,
Not in our restless hour
Shall any poet rhyme
Such pathos and such power.

We shall no longer hear
In these amorphous days
That language like a spear,
That lean athletic phrase.

From our redundant verses,
From vapid and verbose,
Your stubborn skill coerces
The slow astringent rose:

The forehead's rigorous fillet.
The blossom on the cheek,
That, whether or not we will it,
Garlands our grief in Greek.

Now that your mouth the Reaper's
Impartial steel has kissed;
Now that among the Sleepers
You, too, sleep, wrist on wrist,—

Master, take these lines written
By love's impetuous art:
The minor lute-string smitten,
The hand upon the heart.

"Outside of schools and cliques" Auslander writes with the assured conviction and enthusiasm of genius.

Hamilton W. Mabie's comment on genius comes into the mind in considering the poetry of Joseph Auslander:

> "Genius is intensity of life; an overflowing vitality which floods and fertilizes a continent or a hemisphere of being; which makes a nature many-sided and whole, while most men remain partial and fragmentary."

The life of Frederick Mortimer Clapp, born in the City of New York, has been varied, travelled and distinguished. Graduating from Yale, he was made Learned Fellow of the University but relinquished his Fellowship for travel in Europe, making his home for a number of years in Paris and Italy. Mr. Clapp has been an instructor in Greek and lecturer on Elizabethan Drama, Russian literature and the history of art. He is the author of: *On the Overland and Other Poems*, *New York and Other Verses*, *Joshua Trees*, *Les Dessins de Pontormo*, *History of the 17th Aero Squadron* (with which he served as officer), etc.

At the University of Pittsburgh, Clapp organized and directed the Fine Arts Department and, at this writing, we find him as organizer and director of the Frick Collection, having planned and supervised the building and decoration of the new Frick Art Reference Library.

In Mr. Clapp's *New Poems*, a volume of over 100 pages, (Harper Bros.) this author with strong creative impulse and fine vocabulary takes the mind of the reader wheresoever he wills. In "Dawn" the poet carries us to Easter Island instantly:

It's getting light on Easter Island,
and Hoa Haka, the ape-faced stone,
erect on his bald cliff's edge,
looks out
across the diamond-dust flicker of the sea.
He is memorizing rituals,
now all his naked votaries are dead.

Dawn, 8000 miles straight down
under these hunched-up houses
that lurk behind soft moony shadows
and clutch at one another,
frown eyed into frown—
the cobbled steps between
steep up this narrow nameless street
to where a lamp-post suffuses
with sallow glare the damp air . . .

Dawn on Easter Island—
light out of the sea straight into the eyes
of its last inhabitant,
the ape-faced phallic stone,
Hoa Haka, etc., etc.

In " Talons " this poet holds the reader's understanding in the grip of his consideration of Death :

As Death comes nearer fiercely the hoofs beat
Of the stampeded days. Yet age is not
These sloping shadows that bury the noon's heat,
But the collapse of thoughts that chill and clot
In the dimming brain. Once like citadels,
Cliff-perched to dare adventure to their gates,
They seemed, those thoughts, that now the mist that dwells
In the heart itself of time obliterates.
Hoofs in the mist ! There is no pathway back
Out of this place blown bare of tree or flower.
Age stumbles on, and stalling to attack,
Hovering, circles, circles an unseen hour.
Then, like a hawk, seeing the prey it likes,
Snaps shut its wings and, flashing headlong, strikes.

Beautiful and heavily charged with the power of Love is " Idol " :

Face on the darkness, when I close my eyes,
More part of me than my first thought or fear—
Presence and answering image and desire
By which I live, asking no more of life—
Others of wealth and power make a fire
To keep the night from crushing them. Their sighs,
Mingled with words of anguish, grief and strife,
Reach even to my inner solitude
Where, if my day-dreams fade out, they give place,
Not to death's stale vacuity, but to your
Face.

Mr. Clapp's sends us this personal statement on Poetry :

" For me, poetry is the indication of unrealized connections between things and the thought that transforms them under the impulse of emotion rising from the recesses of the mind. It must have a deep-rooted relation to the primary reactions of life and yet an unexpected quality that revivifies them. It foreshortens and intensifies the images through which it is expressed, so that they imply, by their interrelation, perspectives that move the imagination. It is here that sound and association come in. The sound must be integrated and reinforced by new overtones, correspondences and resonance or dissonance. By their effect these can be recognized, but they cannot be easily analysed into

> the movement or resistance of sequences of syllables. They exist in all great poetry from classic times to the present. They are heard unconsciously at first by the poet, as sound sequences and rhythms are heard by the creative musician, and are elaborated in writing and rewriting in some border-land region of the mind where an instinctive sense of adjustment and reason are mixed. But mere musical sound, or telling rhythms, even when adumbrating vivid images, will not, except rarely, make for much more than verse. Sound and imagery are the vehicle, and an intangible depth of sudden perspectives or the contrasting lights of thought are the message of poetry. It has no message, however, in a narrower sense. Real poetry awakens the enharmonics of thought. It has no formal logic. And these enharmonics, though elemental, must be reached by the exceptional angle at which the poet's emotion takes things in—the impredicable impact of his awareness. This brings me to the question of the art of poetry. It seems to me to be concerned, as in painting, with the repeated rearrangements—not to fit a set pattern, though a fixed pattern may well be the general frame—sometimes required to find the exact texture, colour, and progression of ideas or images and sounds that will awake the latently alive, answering thought and emotion in another's mind.
>
> " This explains real free verse, as well as the constant vitality of old forms. It also explains why variety is a quintessential part of poetry, however constant the moulding force of the poet's personality may be. The " quality ' of good poetry will depend naturally on the uniqueness of the poet's sensibility and the rarity of his vision of life. His ' style ' will really be his insight. It will be different. It will have its roots in the past, but it will be unlike the past, for poetry cannot be written according to any formula however happily exemplified in the achievements of other men."

The English edition of John Hall Wheelock's *Poems* 1911–1936, (Charles Scribner's Sons), was reviewed in the last issue of THE POETRY REVIEW, but I would like to add that intellectually alert, temperamentally highly charged with the fire of ecstasy, Wheelock's work stands in the forefront of the poets, and remind you that Alfred Noyes said of Wheelock at The Poetry Society's Jubilee dinner :

> " People say that we are not interested in the new poets. I know one poet and I think he is a great poet. He uses metres that have never been used before ; he follows the great tradition in that he develops it in a significant way. He writes magnificent English, and in 20 years from now he will be recognized as one of the great poets of the English tongue."

John Hall Wheelock has reached a half-century mark. Born at Far Rockaway, Long Island, on the South Shore of Long Island with its captivating charm, there and in the City of New York his boyhood was passed—a graduate of Harvard in 1908, he spent several years of travel and study abroad, returning in 1911 to New York where he now lives. In the group of new poems, Mr. Wheelock celebrates New York, a speaking tribute to his city:

From this sheer tower, as from time's parapet,
  My life looks back upon the world I know—
  The desert where man's hope goes to and fro,
The iron ways in which his feet are set.
Oh, hope unquenchable—what blood, what sweat,
  Fashioned this thing! What timeless sorrows flow
  Beneath these towers and battlements that show
The heart of life indomitable yet!

Here is my world: these are the ways that knew
  My spirit in her joy, the haunts that wore
The garment of her bitterness; you, too,
  Belovèd, amid these millions in full flood,
Move somewhere, far from me—seem mine no more,
  Made one now with the nameless multitude.

The following paragraph is from Mr. Wheelock, in answer to a letter of mine, and embodies his personal reaction to poetry:

> "I think it might be difficult for any poet to analyse the impulse which articulates itself in poetry. I know that some regard the function of poetry as fulfilled in expression: others hold that it is a form of communication and that two are involved in the poetic process—poet and reader (or listener). Personally, I incline towards the latter view. I was very young when I first fell in love with poetry. 'The Lady of the Lake' bowled me over at the age of nine, and I can still recite the poem I wrote at that time in imitation of it. From then on, my greatest source of happiness was poetry, and has so remained, though the flame burned pretty low for a time at school, when baseball and other activities, not to forget the contempt of my schoolmates for any boy who cared for poetry, made serious inroads on my inner life. I couldn't, and shan't try, to explain why I write poetry or why it should be written. Perhaps it shouldn't. Nevertheless, poets will go on writing it or trying to, more or less regardless of the response received."

It is interesting to have a book of poems, *The Human Abstract* (Bruce Humphries), from Alice Very, the daughter of Frank W. Very, the distinguished astronomer and niece of Jones Very, the New England Transcendentalist poet. It is appropriate that we find, among the first poems in this book, one entitled "My Star," a fine expression:

  If thou wert a star
And moved aloof through heaven's bright spaces,

I should behold thee from afar
And worship thee in solitary places.

Far from thy flaming strength
A ray, compassionate, might find me there
And with dimmed radiance I should know at length
That love—too bright, alas, for me to bear.

Life and Death, Love and Loss and Beauty, are subjects—all—that draw the poet. In Miss Very's "Hymn To Beauty," she strikes a profound chord:

Sorrowfully, out of its hollow, distant breathing
Laments the horn this endless dissonance:
All loveliness shall die; it is illusion;
Beauty shall perish.
We have been told of an unearthly music—
Such tones spun out on the tortured violin
That the fine thread drew souls in exquisite madness,
Regenerate from impotence and sin.
We have sought these tones, we have essayed this difficult music,
We have attained a singular degree of purity;
Almost we have blown the bubble of perfect sound;
Then at a breath it shattered in subtle discord,
Tainted with earth, fell to the ground.

It is a lie that misery can make beauty,
That imperfection and decrepitude
Yield supreme good.

Out of our solitude and inward brooding,
Ourselves with strange, inverted faith deluding,
Audibly we project our futile grieving
In empty air—

And to this mirage-miracle of deceiving
We breathe our prayer.

"Definition," which closes this collection is cryptic, and conveys much:

Time, the unfolding,
The all-bestowing,
And all-withholding,
Measure of men;
Itself immortal,
The only end,
The only portal.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

LATVIAN AND ENGLISH LYRICS

DR. WILLIAM K. MATTHEWS, Docent of the University of Latvia, has done something unprecedented in producing *The Tricolour Sun* (Heffer, 4s.) which is more than a chance collection of lyrics. It represents the best of Latvian lyrical output in the short history of the country's literature. His selection of poems is above suspicion (the fact that the book is state-supported gives it the seal of authority), the translations are sympathetic and full of life, there is an essay on Latvian poetry, also commentaries on the poets represented; yet the volume, of which the poems occupy less than a hundred pages, lacks the solidity one would have expected from its comprehensive title.

The fault, however, is not that of the compiler but of his material, which possesses high lyrical quality of a certain kind, but which shows little variety of thought or form. For this its extreme youth may be responsible, for its growth has been rapid and rather beyond its strength. There was no memorable Latvian poetry, as Dr. Williams points out, until half-way through the last century, apart from the many and beautiful anonymous folk-songs, some of which can be traced back to the early thirteenth century. Thus Latvian poetry has developed in under a hundred years along the way which English poetry took over a thousand to cover: with the result that to read such a collection as the present gives the impression of looking at English poetry through the wrong end of a telescope.

From such a drastic compression something had to be omitted, although it is at first difficult to define what that something is. Doubtless the feeling of insolidity is caused by the absence of the "mighty line" and by a frigid observance of conventions. These failings typify "young" poetry; Anglo-Saxon suffered from them, as did American until very recently. Nor does the English of the translations, gifted as it is, overcome the difficulty, for it is almost impossible to carry the onomatopœic quality of one language into another, requiring a Dante for the original and a Rossetti for the translator.

Nevertheless, *The Tricolour Sun*, although hardly a monument to the Latvian Muse, is a collection for which all who love poetry can be grateful, and especially for the earlier poems in it, such as Fricis Barda's *In the Twilight*:

Through the solemn leafy silence
  twilight paces, faintly singing,
and the air is steeped in strangeness,
  and the birds of dream come winging.

Take me by the hand and lead me
  down the ways where light was tender.
God, my feet are on the threshold
  of an alien starry splendour!

Less pleasing are the later poems: *Meditations* by the socially-minded Aleksandrs Caks really need not have begun;

Time past,
from stairway and mouse-cluttered lift-cage,
I
learned to climb doggedly upwards,
but
stairway and light-cage
stop at the seventh cramped storey,
too
low for me now.

English free verse is justified by the tradition behind it, and made necessary by the recent overloading of traditional forms; Latvian has no such justification, and we hope that these later works, which are as conventionally modern as any super-film or super-flat, are only the transitory signs of weediness which mark the adolescent. Already Latvian poetry shows itself to be more than a mere offshoot of German literature.

Compression by lack of material, as in the above case, must be distinguished carefully from compression by selection, which is the keynote of L. Birkett Marshall's selection of *Rare Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 7s. 6d.). Here the editor has done for English poetry of that century what Doughty's *Forgotten Lyrics of the Eighteenth Century* has done for the next, G. B. Abdy's *Victorian Potpourri* for the nineteenth, and what many biassed collectors have tried to do for the present.

There was a deal of dross to be sifted from the gold, but what has been panned justifies the labour. It is difficult to understand why the minor poets of the Jacobine, Caroline and even the Restoration periods have suffered such neglect, for, as Mr. George Saintsbury wrote of the writers of the first half of the century, " none can be said to be familiar to the ordinary reader, but it would be easy . . . to enumerate literally dozens of verse-writers, who, it may be, have done nothing exactly great, whose poetry as a whole has the characteristics of a school rather than of an individual, and yet among whose work you can . . . be pretty sure of finding something for the like of which you may look in vain before 1580 and between 1660 and 1789—something which contains the appealing thought, the original expression, the soft or grave musical sound, and sometimes the vivid picture to the eye which together make up true poetry."

It is true that the period was one of poetical decadence, but Milton himself condescended to borrow freely from these " lost " poets whose work is more truly and exclusively lyrical than that of any other period, coming at a time when the exuberance of the Elizabethans had been mellowed by Donne and his followers, when the pastoral was still a plausible way of escape from everyday politics and politics themselves dealt less than town-planning and wage levels than with abstract ideals. The development of poetry through the century can be traced in this new volume from the early exquisite lyrics of Thomas Beedome to the witty conceits of the Oxford court poets and the high rhetoric of Puritan ministers, and finally to the smooth verse of the Restoration.

It would be unfair to take any lines from this collection for quotation out of their context, but the form of them is of interest, in that they are written almost entirely in rhymed couplets, taking the tradition from Spenser and handing it over, intact, to Dryden. This was their chief service to English literature, for they have hardly anything to add in the way of new forms, while the sonnet was entirely ignored from the early days of Donne until it reached the hands of Milton.

Outside the matter of form, the chief function of the period was that of popularizing the slim volume of individual poems. The publication in 1579 of the collection of songs and sonnets known as *Tottle's Miscellany* started a fashion of publishing books containing poems by several authors. This fashion was ousted by the myriad little books of the seventeenth century, which established the habit of publishing small individual books of verse.

Never has the habit been more prolific that it is to-day, and among many new first volumes one is particularly outstanding—*Poems* (Oxford, 5s.) by Thomas Hennell, with a foreword by Gerard Hopkins who writes: "Mr. Hennell's work is not yet quite sure of itself, but it is genuine and it is fresh. He has brought to it a sensibility unfettered by fashions of literature, and the note he strikes has not been heard in poetry of to-day. The farmer, the painter, and the mystic are combined as authors of his unequal utterance, and many will find a thrill of pleasure in his poems, even when they do not understand."

Despite their "unfettered" nature, their form reminds one of that of the seventeenth-century lyrists, with their couplet rhymes and pastoral setting; the slimness of the production seems to have entered into the spirit of the poems themselves. Like the work of another Gerard Hopkins, Thomas Hennell's poems are skilfully compressed and brimming with meaning:

> In early daylight there are mice and toads
> And such small creeping things, upon the roads,
> Long ere the sun gets up behind the hill
> And brightens fleecy clouds behind the mill:
> How solemnly the elms' rich foliage stood
> Against the still-starred sky, by the dew-shotten wood!

Through the quiet streams of this book runs an undercurrent of reality which cannot be ignored as a force in the new world.

The collection of Sitwelliana into large and comprehensive volumes is carried a step further by the publication of Sacheverell Sitwell's *Collected Poems* (Duckworth, 15s.), much of which is lovely, much striking and all worthy of serious study as the work of a distinguished contemporary, provided the reader is not daunted by the "long introductory essay" by Miss Edith Sitwell, beginning "I have long wished to write at even greater length than was possible in my *Aspects of Modern Poetry* . . ." In its course Miss Sitwell makes several excellent statements hardly consistent with her previous observations on modern poetry, but indicating the welcome change of outlook which promotes remarks such as, "confusion arises from a muddle-headed conception, on the part of certain critics, that a poem is of no importance unless it voices a purely contemporary feeling or problem, or produces a photographic representation of some contemporary theme" and, "if we come to think of it, is a motor bicycle really more beautiful, or of more importance, than the growing of wheat?" It seems a pity that Miss Sitwell should wander from these auspicious paths into many pages of deeply analytical dissection of various passages from the book, proving nothing in particular. However, this rambling prose throws the precision of the poems into higher relief, making the reader more appreciative of poetry that is of the country, yet not merely pastoral, of the mind, yet not merely erudite, of the times, yet not worldly, of the soul, yet—unfortunately—seldom sublime.

Lawrence Pilkington, author of *The Dayspring* and other volumes, has incorporated in one long philosophical poem *Armathwaite* (Longmans, 2s.) a great deal of lyrical exuberance and a great many trite sayings:

> Mystics and poets often choose the shade
>   To waken apprehension in our minds,
> Philosophers would rather choose the light
> To make their meaning clear to other men.

Either because of or in spite of these qualities, the poem is a particularly successful example of the fluent, pensive work which few modern writers can produce. Avoiding the danger of becoming a patriotic eulogy, approached in the stanza beginning: "When England parted with her well-loved King," the poem draws to a devout and strangely satisfying conclusion, whose only drawback is that it *is* the conclusion. We hope Mr. Pilkington will write a good deal more in this vein.

The somewhat tentative verse of Mary Ellen Jackson in *Pedestrian* (Stockwell, 3s. 6d.) shows promise of future high performance if she will be more careful in the use of subsidiary words. "I saw seeds spring up warily" is a careless contradiction. Already Miss Jackson has produced some delicate lyrics, particularly *Futility*, beginning:

> An old man sighing. . . .
>   Shading his eyes against the sun.
> A small boy crying. . . .
>   Eagerly waiting to run.

Miss Jackson's poetry is "eagerly waiting to run," which it should do very well, meanwhile, as *Pedestrian* it is most readable. J.H.E.

MODERNS, PLAIN AND COLOURED

A NEW book by the first and so far the only winner of the King's gold medal for poetry will naturally be regarded as an event of first-class importance in the world of verse. In reviewing *The Emperor Heart* by Laurence Whistler (Heinemann, 5s.), however, we shall disregard this matter; and passing lightly over the approbatory remarks by the Poet Laureate which adorn the inside of the jacket, come to consider the poems themselves.

In the quest for poetic truth which is beauty this book represents a considerable advance on anything that Mr. Whistler has yet produced. There is less innovation for the sake of experiment and the touch has more of certainty, the music a more austere beauty and a richer tone. These thin, clear poems of starlight and cock-crow contain some of the loveliest things that it has been this reviewer's fortune to read for a long time.

When I considered the wood-cuts by the poet's brother which adorn so worthily the beauties of the verse, I thought how strangely suitable was the choice of artistic medium. For Whistler, as a poet, is especially a subtle-handed craftsman, whose work has all the exquisite finish and delicacy of line, the fine almost fragile nuances of tone which particularly distinguish the perfect wood-cut. His poems are the poems of an engraver, and have not great depth, but great luminosity, the breadth of still water, the sheen of frost; and like those frozen crystals the work endures the closest scrutiny.

It is hard to pick individual poems from so fine a collection; for crystal perfection of finish, I should choose " The Glass Chandelier "; for music, " Fear at the Manor "—I heard the music of this poem, a most glorious thing in minor arpeggios, not very swift; for remembering, the Four Inscriptions at the end of the book, of which I quote the " Epitaph on Silver ":

> Perfect they were in skill who fashioned me,
> Every fine thing is made with artistry.
> Rapacious rusty time on me must feed,
> Do not all lovely things to this proceed?
> I am not sad that I am early lit
> To dust's faint bedroom, for all lie in it,
> And in short measures life may perfect be.

The first two lines of that might well stand for a text for the whole book—which however is surely not destined to " dust's faint bedroom," early or late.

When we come to *The Year's Poetry*, 1936 (The Bodley Head, 6s.) we find ourselves among a company in which the word " modern " comes first, and poetry a long way second. These are the plain ones: their colours, if any, are dim. It is extraordinary how in content of names this volume varies little from year to year; and contains inevitably large and indigestible slices of that so-called free verse which would look so much better written as prose ; this sort of thing, I mean :

Adolescent admirers of wintry
Emaciated brocade, the skirter
Around the moment
Grovelling before shards and thigh-bones
Reachers after glib echoes ;
Ring-worm spreaders of a serial itch
Mewers of heart's flare . . .

—and so on, *ad nauseam*, from Ronald Bottrall, W. Empson, R. P. Hewett, George Barker and the several others whom an intensive study of Milton, Goethe, Leopardi or Whitman might in time teach the difference between prose and *vers libre*.

Not that there is not lovely poetry in this book : I found seven superlatively beautiful poems, and ten more which were true and very fine. The best poems in the collection, John Pudney's " Moon-Bathers," and Whistler's " Glass Chandelier," would give lustre and enduring worth to any book. And in fairness to the verse-gatherers, it must be pointed out that their aim is to collect, not the best poetry of the year, but the most representative ; along which lines it takes, I suppose, all sorts to make an anthology—didactic frigidity, impassioned tub-thumping, and sometimes and unexpectedly pure serenity and beauty.

We return to colours again in the admirable shilling series of *Selections from Edwardian Poets*, the first three volumes of which have just been issued by the Richards Press, under the editorial supervision of John Gawsworth. The three poets represented so far are Anna Wickham, M. P. Shiel and E. H. Visiak ; the series is excellent value and should be—and probably will be—collected by every discriminating lover of poetry. Others, we hear, are " in active preparation " and we look forward to seeing the results of this activity.

Colours, gaudy and mingled and swept along with words ! They are the best after all. Specially glowing with colour is E. H. Visiak's poetry :

" When I had sight, great glamour was
In myriad lamps of coloured glass "

—he says ; and great glamour is in these poems—or rather songs, for they sing themselves and carry their music. Such natural singing as this is too rare to-day and for that I say this writer is a poet, and, I believe, a great one. He concludes a memorable selection, with " Every Poet's Epitaph " :

My work is done ;
Well may it thrive :
Now I am dead
Still be alive ;
Now I am beggared

Low in the grave,
May it still give
As much as I gave.

I think it does.

The other books in this series are noticeable for a certain violence which makes one think of Sir Toby Belch—" and as thou drawest, swear horrible . . . " ; by which I do not mean to decry them, nor to deny that they are lovely in parts. Anna Wickham's " Call of the Dead," " The Happy Mathematician " and " The Boy and the Trees " would be memorable in any anthology, and I wish I had space to quote all three of them ; they would be wonderful value at fourpence each, if there were nothing else in the book. Equally well worth having and holding is the very lovely poem, powerful and original in conception, " To Venus at Twilight," from M. P. Shiel's volume. Herell is an iridescence of all the colours, whether of paint-box or of prism, and for sound, in the poet's words :

" choirs of humming-tops that musing chime
And vent an Orphic moan,
Or choirs of winds, or souls in rhyme
With the Eternal Tone."

T. Weston Ramsey.

Four Irish Poets.

Ploughman and Other Poems, by Patrick Kavanagh, is the latest of Macmillan's admirable Contemporary Poets (1s.). Mr. Kavanagh is one of a number of Irish poets both past and present with heart in the countryside, and *Ploughman* bears this out, for his joy thus finds expression—

" O, the quiet ecstasy
Like a prayer

I find a star-lovely art
In a dark sod.
Joy that is timeless ! O heart
That knows God ! "

as he thus paints " the meadow brown " with his plough. Several of the poems, on account of their mystical qualities, are rivulets from the flowing stream that had at one time its source in primaeval songs, the poetic lore of a long bygone pagan world. As Maeterlinck wrote, " our intelligence is the creation of intelligences that are no more." He in fact addresses the " Blackbird " as a " pagan poet " who is at one with himself.

The poet has found vision ; Earth's glories are therefore but " a thread-worn story," the Intangible, the Eternal alone matters. We find precisely the same mystical feeling expressed by Rimbaud :

" Elle est retrouvée
Quoi ? l'éternité

C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil."

Such poems as " Dreamer," " April," " A Wind," etc., are curious abstractions in their representation of nature instinct with graceful loneliness such as " the meadow-chair," " leaf-full branches," " bronze leafed beech," and so on, as applied to thoughts and feelings, as well as impressions from natural surroundings, a method adopted by Mallarmé, Verlaine and other French symbolists, and also by W. B. Yeats.

The lighter lyrics, " Gold Watch," " Phoenix," " Inniskeen Road," are excellent examples of the poet's muse in this direction, and others, such as " To a late Poplar," are of a texture woven from fancy's skein.

In *The Three Brothers and Other Poems* (Nelson, 2s. 6d.), Frank O'Connor, who is already well known as a writer of Irish fiction, displays a fresh development in contemporary verse by originality of form ; and for substance what might be termed a fourth-dimensional range of vision respecting Irish affairs both civil and political. He also gives in his own versification personal impressions, such as in " Alone," " Irish Channel," and others. " The Statue of Life " carries the reader back to those days when the peasantry " shook off the gentry's yoke," and after having mentally lived in the past, and raved about the old kingships, they metaphorically speaking killed their godlike leader in order to receive a Church blessing, because of a very human indiscretion. Now the poet wishes to set up a statue as the symbol of life in order

To swell the tides of passion,
And straighten every back,
And fill the town with music,
Give life to Joan and Jack,

instead of reverting to the dark ages of oppression and consequent depression.

The Three Old Brothers is an excellent satiric poem on the follies of youth which the old men rejoice in having outlived by so many decades, and compare notes regarding the fate of their old lovers ; as they had met before disillusionment, fallen foul of their griefs like Paris, and the three Ulster brothers.

There is little what is termed " pure poetry " in the volume, but the following lines reach a high standard :

" While our strong ship ,
Crushes her way through the calm russet seas at dawn,"

and

" Pale she is, and her looped tresses
Are dull gold with lights of silver
As she stops and pants beneath the
Lancelight of the rustling branches.

Ten Irish Love Songs, by Sidney Dobell (Talbot Press, 2s. 6d.) is published primarily for a circle of friends, but the poems are enjoyable to others also though the allusions to place names seem to have more of convention than significance to them. " Soliloquy " has particular charm from its unusual metaphor of the hands :

I will build me a little house
   Where the winds and the sun run free,
A little house on a hill,
   With a glimpse of the sea ;

And there will be beauty there
   Where the quiet poplar stands,
And forgetting of time and care
   In the creel of " Her " hands.

I will build me a little house
   For the Pulse of my Heart and me ;
A little, wee house on a hill,
   And beyont—the sea.

Thronging Feet, by Robert Farren (Roibeard O' Faracháin) (Sheed and Ward) is a collection of poems written by a young Irishman who has tuned his lyre according to varied themes, and it constitutes another forward movement in his native poesy. Some of these in dealing with religious subjects display a deep mysticism as in " Sed Tantum Die Verbo " and " Post-Communism," also " By the Ladder of Things Created," a really beautiful poem that might well be compared with Francis Thompson for ecstasy of feeling. Other poems are written as if under the influence of the same race-consciousness that had inspired the early bards ; and also when poetry had attained full flower of beauty during the early Christian period in many of the ancient hymns, and in his versions notably " Immolation " he proves himself to be well versed in Gaelic lore. His verse construction is extremely diversified, and many poems are written in what is named polyphonic prose. I would call attention to a poem he has named " Blind " :

" To me the stars are strange—no rose,
no daffodil nor cherry-bloom has ' sung
my soul to Arcady '."

" Young Slumland Street," and " A Song of a Tramping Man " are excellent examples of his lighter muse. The poem " Chesterton " is both simple and pleasing in its construction, and a sincere tribute to the memory of one of our greatest modern poets and writer of delightful prose :

" Chesterton dead ! That is to say and say
gloriae lumen : Francis and the gay
commissioned angels took him yesterday."

My hope is that the volume will receive the full public appreciation it deserves. H. T. Hunt Grubb.

CRYSTALLIZATION IN NEW POETRY

A JAQUES in his settled melancholy, A. E. Housman gently rails against the world in his posthumous *More Poems* (Cape, 5s.) as in his earlier volumes—one theme pervading them all—but the variations on it are as numerous as they are beautiful, so that in some way he touches the sadness that is in every life and makes of each poem an individual poignancy; and they are curiously impersonal though nearly always written in the first person:

They say my verse is sad: no wonder;
  Its narrow measure spans
Tears of eternity, and sorrow,
  Not mine, but man's.

This is for all ill-treated fellows
  Unborn and unbegot,
For them to read when they're in trouble
    And I am not.

He is as consistent in form as he is in theme, keeping closely to a few metrical patterns and a simplicity of idiom in which an amazing subtlety of thought is exquisitely crystallized, seemingly by just a turn of phrase here and there. Crystallization is one of the essentials of memorable poetry, and is a very different thing from the crude condensation of some of the ultra modernists, who believe they load their lines with thought because they have jettisoned all the vehicular particles and verbs. Often the immobile stuff that remains is mere ballast. We get crystallization of a different order in the work of Roy Campbell, who also keeps mostly to a few forms, notably a sequence of sonnets in tetrameter lines. His is the brilliant quick-changing image, the snatched lightning, the rapid rhyme-chime, and, in satire, the direct hit. *Mithraic Emblems* (Boriswood, 7s. 6d.) contains poems of a deeper symbolism than he has yet given. Taking Mithras, the god of light, as the vassal of Christ (and sometimes almost synonymous with Him) he depicts the seven colours of the spectrum as seven swords, in their turn the symbols of differing attributes—beauty, sorrow, anger, etc. The fourth sonnet in the sequence is introductory to those that follow:

Of seven hues in white elision,
the radii of your silver gyre,
are the seven swords of vision
that spoked the prophet's flaming tyre;
their sistered stridences ignite
the spectrum of the poet's lyre
whose unison becomes a white
revolving disc of stainless fire,
and sights the eye of that sole star
that, in the heavy clods we are,
the kindred seeds of fire can spy,

> or, in the cold shell of the rock,
> the red yolk of the phoenix-cock
> whose feathers in the meteors fly.

As might be expected, much of the imagery is taken from the kopje and the bull-ring ; indeed, some of the poems were written in Toledo very recently :

> Toledo, when I saw you die
> And heard the roof of Carmel crash,
> A spread-winged phoenix from its ash
> The Cross remained against the sky !
> With horns of flame and haggard eye
> The mountain vomited with blood,
> A thousand corpses down the flood
> Were rolled gesticulating by,
> And high above the roaring shells
> I heard the silence of your bells
> Who've left these broken stones behind
> Above the years to make your home,
> And burn, with Athens and with Rome,
> A sacred city of the mind.

Another section of the book is devoted to satire, of which weapon Mr. Campbell has already proved himself the bitter master, and though he kills indiscriminately there is no slashing, only deadly swordplay, as keen and cruel as it is clever. " Smug England, stingy France, bloody Spain " are all thrust through, but it is to smugness that he is most merciless :

> The sky was hung with bales of frowsy stuff
> And heaven seemed one festival of fluff—
> Beneath, John Bull stood ankle deep in mud
> And of his morning paper chewed the cud,
> While all around him, splashing through the rain,
> A million Charlies waddled for the train ;
> Save for the flying chits no clouds but these
> That settled fluttering in the leafless trees
> Urging the frozen Charlies as they ran
> To rise and battle for the rights of man—
> What rights they'd get, the contest did not show
> Except to answer syrens when they blow.

The finest poem in the book is " A Jug of Water," a longish lyric, full of lovely imagery, faith and delight. The sword symbol is again used, but is only one of many, for water, as these three verses show :

> Honed on the spinning of the solar wheel
> This sword was wielded by the Sun's great arm :
> Stronger than dynamite, its lovely charm
> Can win its way through adamant and steel.

With one white stroke unaided and alone,
Daring that fiery dragon to the chance,
It cuts in half the Desert's huge expanse
For all its menaces of sand and stone.

Wings, flowers and flames are folded in its peace—
This common water where the sunlight falls ;
Shake it, and from your hand you can release
A flight of coloured pigeons round the walls.

Another important poet of South Africa, William Plomer (author of *Cecil Rhodes* among other books) works too on traditional lines, but not all the time, in *Visiting the Caves* (Cape 5s.), and has his own methods of crystallization. His idiom is straightforward, and a little stark rather than subtle, and he has a habit of deliberately slipping in a pedestrian end-line to many verses. Sometimes this is very effective, the surprise of it driving his point home, but there are instances when it deadens the intensity of the poem and leaves one dulled rather than shaken. Ths sensation is excellently suggested in " The Devil Dancers," where:

The fretful pipes and thinly crying strings,
The mounting expectation of the drums
Excite the nerves, and stretch the muscles taut
Against the climax—but it never comes ;

The title poem shows this habit working both ways :

Suddenly I discover in a wooded place
That the trees are rooted in the hollow of your hand,
And when with finger-tips your veins I trace
See branching runnels in the firm sea-sand.

The lift, the gangway and the staircase lead to you,
And you, my bed and pillow, give me rest ;
I visit the caves and am guided, and I know
Those galleries are glittering within your breast;
Whatever you receive I share
And I carry you like a passport everywhere.

Words are born between my fingers, you their source,
And the pen I hold is as delicate as a bone,
With you for compass I can steer a course
And with you for company can bear to be alone :
Bringing goodness out of complicated evil
The world (for me) you have raised to your level.

Your moorland strength sustains me in the street,
And the thought of you touches me like a plectrum strings—
Child, parent, mate, heart with a steady beat.
Yours is the warmth in which the future sings.

and " The Knife-like Will " sharp faceted crystallization of thought :

Ships cut the waves, to meet them rise new places,
Valley ferns and foreign voices,
And where the plough rips up the turf
Sunburnt wheat will shiver, yearning for the blade.

The knife-like will that kills creates what it desires,
Is manhood's emblem, as the sword was once,
Shapes with the pen or plunges in the flesh,
Stabs to renew, cuts clean along the grain,
Drills where the seam runs, for riches in the rock,
Spies in the busy blood, and in the sleeping brain
Overturns empires, sets them up again.

While keeping S. Africa in view, there is one poem of particular significance in *Mirages* by Florence Louie Friedman (Unicorn Press, 3s. 6d.) called " To a South African Poet." It seems safe to assume that it is addressed to Roy Campbell for it begins :

Can genius be curbed ? It is a steed
Leaping all barriers that would its course impede,
With nostrils quivering, unrestrained it flies
Snorting its proud defiance to the skies.
A host walled in by smugness hears the thunder
Of those impetuous hoofs—in savage wonder
They gaze in horror, venomous with fear
And shuddering at the sight attempt to jeer,
As he, the scorned pariah of their tribe,
The butt of envy, malice, blow and jibe,
Alone and spurned by all that cowering crowd,
A hated outcast, solitary, unbowed,
Seizes the magic reins—for he alone
Can claim that terrible charger for his own : . . .

and ends thus :

Yet you, oh poet ! worship not alone
" A god superbly stronger than their own "—
Whilst riding on towards the towering heights
Inhaling vigorous breaths and rare delights
Of unpolluted airs, unfettered, strong,
Know far below, amidst the brawling throng,
Are those who gazing summitwards rejoice
To hear the stirring echoes of a voice—
That, as a hushed volcano suddenly
Disgorging flames of quenchless majesty,
Has stormed the world of heart and soul and sense
With scorching floods of flaming eloquence.

This poem and one called " Irrationality " are the best of a rather uneven collection where some are too smooth, and some are too angular, and some are chopped into little staccato fragments that destroy their natural cadences.

The title of a book by Allan E. Cross, *Thunder Over Jerusalem: Poems of Justice* (Association Press N.Y., $1) might suggest violent propaganda, and it is true that the author is out to redress economic social wrongs, being in ardent sympathy with the toiling millions, not only of America but the world over. His creed is no red revolution, however, but that of a Christian equality. The poetry has great ideals without being great poetry, for, though it has flashes of power, it is a little self-conscious and is apt to allow the sonorous sound of a line to blur clear thinking. " May Day, 1936,"one of the best poems, is a reasoned eloquence far more convincing than many other people's rhetoric :

A green haze in the trees, and in the stream
Green shadows sink and rise ; some mighty hand
Opens and shuts, as in a poet's dream,
Squeezing out beauty from the living land.
Not death but life this May Day brings to earth ;
Not hatred but a heart to break men free !
This is earth's resurrection, the re-birth
Of Comradeship and high equality !

God left the world where he was not at home,
(Slave pens and galleys under lash and goad) ;
When men break bread together he can come ;
When every creature draws an equal load
Old fields grow green, the soft brown furrows sing,
The Comrade comes to end our suffering !

Of members' books of verse recently published the outstanding one is *Earth Gleams in Beauty's Aureole* (Avon House, N.Y.) by Catherine Brewster Toosey, who read from it herself at one of The Poetry Society's Wednesday Readings in December. The work is interesting for its very detailed observation, its experimentation in long runs of stresses, and its individuality. I think the long allegorical poem, though it has moments of real beauty, is less successful than the shorter lyrics where Miss Toosey's realistic painting is more effective, also they do not offer her the same temptation to digress in a kind of qualifying sequence from their subject. There are some sensitive personal poems towards the end of the book, but " Where Spirits Walk " shows best the realism of the word painting combined with spiritual undertones. The influence (direct or indirect) of Hopkins' idiom will be noticed :

Silent path below dark tree eaves
Dimmed and cloistered walk death-quiet :
'Neath the thinking shade of brown leaves
Spirits march in contemplation.

Still the stream which flows in slow way
Shallow as an open book's page :
Founded Truth and only I say—
Spirits file close to stream slight.

Straight in the Cherwell fish swim blue-grey
Poised to be held like thought made perfect :
Reason rises to blaze out : dawns day
Sternly Spirits Light face : smile They.

Long is the reed in river's water
Flowing like gown of bent but swift don :
Spirits going near Thames' daughter
Tread eternally the path round.

Unseen robin faintly chatters
Stutters song afraid and childish :
Spirits shall think over matters,
Long when gone are Men and Earth old.

Long when fish are frozen hard dead
Long when curving path has far past :
Ancient stream is dry in dust bed—
When the falling leaves have all flown.

Miss Mary Gamble, in her *Sonnets* (Stockwell, 1s.) writes with a quiet courage, sometimes of herself but more often of the seasons and scenes she loves, for all these have significance for her though the poems are often weakened by the imperfection of the imagery, which changes irrelevantly instead of building up a complete analogy. " Courage " is admirable in sentiment :

To face the truth of all that life may hold,
To use each new experience and to mould
   The varied pattern like a silken thread
Into my living and enrich the store
   Of inner strength. Not to escape from life
As thousands do, but pierce it to the core
   And cut away the canker with a knife
Sharpened by truth and pointed with desire
   To live ; and make the process not a load
Too weary to be born. To fan the fire
   Of pulsing life at each step of the road.
To take from life with open arms and give
Back to the world the knowledge how to LIVE.

Two more of these books come from Combridge's, Hove, in their shilling series, . . . *Poems* by M. Freda Turner, and *Arrows of the Dawn* by Reginald C. Eva, and both authors have had poems printed in the

Sussex County Magazine among other papers, and are known to readers of THE POETRY REVIEW. Much as she loves her landscape it is her subject poems that make the stronger appeal. " On the Two Minutes' Silence " is especially moving:

> We do not need the lulled and sobbing moments
> That we may still remember all their pain,
> And the unsleeping measure of our sorrow
> When those we loved were found among the slain.
> Is there not always now a frozen silence
> Within our hearts' most secret, hid retreat—
> A silence which can never more be broken
> Though the loud clamour of our longing beat
> For ever on the muffled doors, which yielded
> Their youthful laughter in the years now set?
> Two traffic-silent minutes to remember!
> But is there any time when we forget?

Mr. Eva handles his verse masterly, enriching his descriptions with apt imagery and his imagery with philosophy. I like too the vigour of his sea painting and quote from a poem called " Sea ":

> These are Her gifts: the speeding yachts that fly
> In white-sailed beauty by the chalk-cliffed Isle;
> Harsh hiss and rattle of receding stones
> On tortured beaches; and the aftermath
> Of wild October gales that leave the strand
>
> Deep-strewn in oozy weed; pale ghostly gleam
> Of seawrack in the darkness; green-tressed rocks
> And wreaths of mussels on old rotting quays;
> Divinest hues of heaven, and cheerless grey;
> The harbour's welcome, and the rocks unseen;
> A life new-found in clean salt-laden breath,
> And battered ships and cruelty and death.

E. D. BANGAY.

OLD AGE AND YOUTH: A CONTRAST

I have before me two books of light and witty verse by Thomas Thornely, who describes himself as a senile Cambridge don. The first is *Aganella*. (This damsel invented the ball, and taught Nausicaa how to play with it.) This is a third and revised edition (Heffer, 3s. 6d.), of a volume which was first published in 1919, and received warm commendations from the Press. Like some other writers of amusing verse, such as Owen Seaman and Barry Pain, Mr. Thornely can, on solemn occasions, rise to poetry of high worth and dignity, and " build the lofty line," but normally his is a witty mind that almost thinks in epigrams. Probably he said some pungent things to his nurse in his perambulator.

Here are some lines from " The Male Mantis to his Mate " :

" Though to thine ardours I respond,
Full well I know my fate will be,
Through the dark hours to find thee fond,
Then making a morning meal for thee."

" Possessing, I shall be possessed,
And indistinguishably thine.
Thou, my weird wife, art doubly blest,
With me to love, on me to dine ! "

And here a few pithy lines from a poem to a college tutor at the beginning of the Academic year :—

" Your place resume with those who sit,
Where wine and wisdom flow,
And burnish up the tarnished wit,
That sparkled long ago.

Once more the vacant hour beguile,
With tales you love to tell,
And meet once more the embarrassed smile,
Of those who know them well."

His new book (Heffer, 2s. 6d.) is called *Provocative Verse and Libellous Limericks.* Here are specimens of the former :

" To make one sense perform another's duty,
To say that scents are ' loud,' or sounds are ' blue.'
May give to verse an adventitious beauty,
Or, what some think is better, something new.
But let us have it only once or twice,
Repeated, it becomes a dull device."

And,

" Because great verse, that everybody knows,
Has met, at first, with cold derision, some
Think their derided snips of tuneless prose
Will be acclaimed great verse, in days to come."

When we turn to the Limericks we find some of the best specimens since Edward Lear invented the form. Most modern Limericks are flat and dull, as if evidenced by the results of the not infrequent competitions. Listen to Mr. Thornely:

" There was an old Man who declined
To expose the contents of his mind
To an Analyst's view.
For he said that he knew,
The stuff these inquisitors find."

" A morbid and decadent Youth
Says—Beauty is greater than Truth,
But by Beauty I mean
The obscure, the obscene,
The diseased, the decayed, the uncouth."

" An Advocate said, when he found
He had taken untenable ground—
I am ready to swear
That some brute of a mare
Has been furtively nesting around."

" There was an old Man of the Lakes,
Who was horribly frightened of snakes,
So, to keep them away,
He drank whisky all day.
That deluded old Man of the Lakes ! "

" A scornful young Poet says—Rhyme
Is a waste of both trouble and time,
And metre is worse,
You should slip through your verse
With the ease of an eel in its slime."

It would form an interesting thesis for a Doctorate of Letters to enquire why the Limerick's form notoriously lends itself so readily to humour that is more or less Rabelaisian. Nay, sometimes this strange form attains to real poetry. The cry of the " Young man of Leghorn, who wished he had never been born " echoes the words of Sophocles, in *Oedipus Coloneus*, " Not to be born is, past all prizing, best," while the last three lines, for which I have, unfortunately, no space, recall how hopelessly mankind is the helpless plaything of wayward Fate. Was it Meredith or was it Hardy who told of " ironic laughter of gods in the back-ground ? "

Ta Hio, the great learning, newly rendered into the American language by Ezra Pound (Stanley Nott, 2s.) is a translation from the Chinese of a chapter of Confucius and of commentaries thereon by a disciple. Neglected education debars me from criticizing the accuracy of Mr. Pound's Chinese scholarship. I know that when he handles Greek and Latin he does so as Talleyrand politely said that the Duke of Wellington spoke French—*avec courage*. I trust that Mr. Pound's adventures into Chinese do not show the same individual originality.

It will be seen that the book has been translated into the American language. This bears a strong likeness to the parent English, though here and there the offspring asserts its personality by displaying a cloven hoof. Thus, in the chapter headed " On the duty of renovating or of enlightening the people," the first apophthegm runs :

" On the bath-tub of King Tching-thang
was the inscription : ' Renovate, dod gast you, renovate ! ' "

To Western eyes the immemorial wisdom of the East, as here presented looks commonplace and platitudinous. But it may have been new and profound three thousand years ago. Anyhow, one is tempted to hope that Mr. Ezra Pound will continue to devote himself to this harmless occupation.

Poems like *Reading the Spirit* by Richard Eberhart, (Chatto & Windus, 6s. net), if one may judge from the journals and anthologies which, as he records, have published some of them, appeal to those who read poetry as if it were a crossword puzzle, preferring the difficult, the obscure, the unintelligible because it flatters their self-esteem, when they are able, or think they are able, to discern a meaning of some sort where ordinary people entirely fail.

Here are two specimens :

"ON FIRST HEARING BEETHOVEN'S OPUS 27"

I see the ghostcrab on the beach,
Quaking with his glassy feet
Dance-back and attack, recoil,
Frenzied in his teeming fear
Lance ! dance ! dance ! chance !
Sheer being : feeling sheer
The world, away but this,
The focus of my whole existence
I see the death-dance on the beach
Screeched ! pierced with identity,
The taste of electricity.

"MY BONES FLEW APART."

My bones flew apart. They flew to the sky,
And as great knockers knocked the air.
The bone God said, Come in,
My soul flew in small and dry.

I was big with thick desire,
I had love like leopard's love,
Time was, time is, time will be,
But see me change I cried horrified.

Mr. Michael Roberts's charming and ably written preface I found so dangerously persuasive that I had to turn back to the poems themselves in order to break the spell. This they did, instantly.

Thorns of Thunder (Europa Press and Stanley Nott, 5s.) is a selection of poems translated by various hands from the French of Paul Eluard. In his foreword Mr. George Reavey says—

> " Surrealism is primarily an art of dynamic images which discards the test of reality (' Le canard du doute aux levres de vermouth ') ; and at the same time it is a laboratory for investi-

> gating the psychological phenomena involved in such a process. This preoccupation with the very sources of creative activity makes surrealist art essentially lyrical."

So now we know. Here are two specimens.

" A face at the end of the day
A cradle in the day's dead leaves
A bouquet of naked rain
Every sun hidden
Every spring of springs in the water's depths
Every mirror of broken mirrors
A face in the scales of silence
A pebble among pebbles
For the fronds of the last glimmers of day
A face like all the forgotten faces."

" Anger is honey that loses its perfume
The shelter of the flames is consumed
A good end to our vile and eager succour of yesterday's images
The sylvan perfection the sun's pretty manger
The melting medals of love
The faces that are the crumbs of yearning
To-morrow's children this evening's sleep
All these bear the mark of black wounds.

" And so does the woman I want."

It is sad and curious to find a man of such forthright sincerity as Herbert Read adhering to this nightmare creed, as he does in a short preface to this volume.

Psyches Atreion, by F. A. Medes Regester (Duckworth, 5s.), is a curious performance. It is a re-writing, but in rhymed verse, of Keats's *Hyperion*, Keats's own lines being very freely drawn on. It is strange homage for a disciple to render to a master, but Mr. Regester has fulfilled his self-imposed task fairly well. But I wonder what he thinks the word *Atreion* means? He seems to suggest that it means a resting place, but it is certainly not Greek.

I have on my table two volumes which belong to the select class of books into which one can always dip, however often they have been read.

The first is Maurice Baring's *Have you anything to declare?* (Heinemann, 8s. 6d.). It is a notebook of things which have attracted and arrested the author on his journeyings through sundry literatures. Each page records a passage, perhaps a line, perhaps many lines, of prose or poetry, with usually some understanding and illuminating comments on the text, and with one or more translations if the quotation is in Greek, Latin, German, Italian, Spanish or Russian.

The other book is Vernon Rendall's *The Way of a Man with a Maid*

(Methuen, 8s. 6d.), described as "an anthology of courtship and wooing." It is a collection of love-scenes from Jacob's wooing of Rachel down to the present day. Even comic love-scenes are included. It is a pity that Mr. Rendall did not include one of the most original of all descriptions of a proposal of marriage, the one penned by the amazing child of nine who wrote *The Young Visiters*, with its startling climax . . .

> "No no cried Bernard and taking the bull by both horns he kissed her violently on her dainty face. My bride to be he murmured several times."

Mr. Louis MacNeice has translated Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (Faber and Faber, 5s.). As he has professedly made his version primarily for the stage and states that he has consciously sacrificed what he calls "the liturgical flavour of the diction," it is, perhaps, unfair to judge his work by the standards of poetry. Certainly in readability, though it may have as much of that quality as is presented by Browning's rugged "transcription"—Browning revelled in the "liturgical diction"—it falls behind Anna Swanwick's translation and far behind Morshead's version, long since enshrined in *The Golden Treasury* series.

Here are a few lines by Mr. MacNeice, and the corresponding lines by Morshead.

Soon shall we know about the illuminated torches,
The beacons and the fiery relays,
Whether they were true or whether like dreams
That pleasant light came here and hoaxed our wits.

* * *

Soon shall we know whereof the bale-fires tell,
The beacons, kindled with transmitted flame;
Whether, as well I deem, their tale is true,
Or whether like some dream delusive came
The welcome blaze but to befool our soul.

I know nothing of stage-craft, but I do know which rendering is the more subtly true, the more pleasing, the more musical.

However, Mr. MacNeice's translation has been now performed, and I am told by one of The Poetry Society's Gold Medallists, able to appreciate and competent to speak good verse, that it sounded well on the boards. EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

THE LATEST FICTION OF TWO POETS

We can but wonder whether it would be possible for Shakespeare to recognize his own creations if he were shown them in the astonishing representations of to-day. His charming Rosalind displaying the actions of a street gamin and turning a somersault. His Cleopatra unable to speak the noble words he wrote for her so as to be understood. Now appears a novel (*The Friendly Tree*, Day Lewis, Cape), which, according to the publisher's vaunt, portrays "a modern Miranda." A Miranda who, aged nineteen, drinks four pints of ale (we suppose it is ale), in a public bar, a Miranda who talks to herself of "bitchery," and of the expected lover whose hands shall "subdue her breasts." Well, well, we must, we suppose, be modern at any cost but this Anna is a far, far call from Shakespeare's Miranda.

It would appear that Mr. Day Lewis has taken as model the ancient prophet's saying "that a man shall be as rare as the gold of Ophir," for he has not one character in this novel that can be termed "a man." There is the stereotyped heavy father, one of those modernly pictured parents who, as Saturn, are only bent on devouring their offspring; it would appear that the time has come when an incubator should be provided to receive children from the hour they first draw breath in this world, that is if we are to judge from the fearful crimes parents are represented, in modern novels, as committing against charming (?) sons and daughters. This father is a poor caricature. Then we have an uncouth youth, Steve, who savagely utters labour cliches but never performs any real actions, save sexual ones. There is also a decadent young "scion of good family," but the hints concerning him and his unpleasant sister (unless we grievously wrong the author), are decidedly unsavoury.

We turn to the all-important point of the language in which Mr. Day Lewis writes. The publishers declare that this love-story is set down with "the firm sensitiveness of a born novelist." Well, well, we feel that perhaps the adjective "newly" should have been inserted before "born," for we should have expected that a poet and a "born novelist" would, at least, have written grammatically if not beautifully. We find this "he disliked them because nobody touched his cap to him"; if we have to pass this sentence because the uncouth Steve utters it, what about the author's own description of a hill near Malvern where "a wet fog moved in the offing, keeping pace with her on all sides." The offing, meaning distance at sea, how did this obliging fog keep pace with the young woman? It is not suggested that she was walking on the sea but standing on the hill, musing on "bitchery"—a modern maiden's meditation, fancy free. Again, in his description of the village he writes of a "posh" new recreation ground. We can only suppose that the author imagines that it is romantic and poetic to picture his heroine discarding her clothes and standing stark naked in the woods, but as she twice performs this action, it becomes a little cheap, even if modern. We would also, after Rosa Dartle's fashion, like to know if it is the custom of present-day youths to speak to girls of flowers, as "the opening of the womb", or to cry to a newly-betrothed Miranda "a bed, a bed, Clerk Saunders said"? To be quite candid this sex-business is the whole theme of this novel, and it is cloying to the last degree; the fog of rank desire is not in the "offing" it has crept up and submerged the whole landscape. Anna sees some harmless golfers as "clockworm maggots" but Mr. Day Lewis presents his characters to us as living maggots, and we frankly object to the creatures. Steve has a long monologue of exceedingly cheap blasphemy; if his ideas on labour are on the same level, then Satan—or Mr. Day Lewis—help him.

Another poet writes another novel, *Eggs and Baker*, Heinemann (7/6); Mr. John Masefield has chosen an awkward title, it seems selected merely for effect, but it is, at least, the story of real men and women, and, at best, it proves a sympathetic account of a lovable and sensitive little baker, whose heart is stronger than his brain. He and his son, Bob, are recognizable persons and not "clockwork maggots," and the wife, Tryphena, a honest little soul, if not much wiser than her husband. The book is also essentially a clean novel (which fact, it is to be feared, will not recommend it to the "bright young things" of to-day), but it does make it something of an oasis in the present arid desert of sex-stories. The long scenes in the court are too drawn out and might have been portrayed more pictorially and less resembling a reporter's column in the newspaper. There is far too much dwelling on quite unimportant details. This was the fault also in *The Dauber*. In that poem the story would have been infinitely stronger if a quarter of the carefully noted details had been ruthlessly cut away. For instance, in this story of the little baker's agonized compassion for the half-witted boy, why had we to be informed that a girl of fourteen was sick in the train, or to be assured of the strange fact that she had never been in a railway carriage before, in the year 187–?

One reviewer says that you may hate John Masefield "for his views, if he has any views," or "for his style, if he has a style." This half-verdict leads nowhere and is conducive to mental vertigo. Boiled down it seems to imply that John Masefield writes at top speed and with an exuberance that stays not for grammatical niceties or probabilities. For the weak ending of producing a good fairy kind of wealthy Aunt out of the blue spoils the book, and when this beneficent god-mother and the sick baker wildly exchange texts from Ezekiel we are left, as Bob and Tryphena must have been left also, with our mouths open with amazement. The result is that we feel Mr. John Masefield has written of an episode in a court of law as he sees it and not compiled a novel. As to style, perhaps, it is best not touched upon at all.

ARTHUR HOOD.

While some other poets have been using their spare time in writing inconsequential novels, lacking inspiration and even skill in story-telling, Mr. Alfred Noyes has been deep in a study of *Voltaire* (Sheed and Ward, 12s. 6d.) digesting his hundred volumes and assembling a biography that can properly be described as exhaustive. The social and literary interest of the cynic who prepared the way for the French Revolution is still significant to the modern world, and provides more interesting constructive reading than any of the novels afore indicated; and behind the biographer is the theologian seeking a religious key to Voltaire's profound soul, less that of an atheist than an agnostic, prepared to discover and be reconciled to that Unknown God, Whom Mr. Noyes attempted to describe in a previous volume with logic and insight. For us there is peculiar interest in this delineation of the vital spirit of Voltaire, which found expression at seventeen in *Oedipe* and through a long series of poems and poetic drama, culminated in *Irene* at the age of eighty-four, the most significant and indomitable of Mr. Noyes's torchbearers.

Wordsworth described his religion as one of gratitude, based upon nature, humanity, friendship and the Bible; taking this statement as his guide, the Rev. A. D. Martin has written a challenging and original book concerning the poet's religious beliefs. He has examined Wordsworth's prose as well as his poetry, and deals especially with his attitude towards nature and national affairs. *The Religion of Wordsworth* (Allen and Unwin, 3s. 6d.), closes with an appreciation of the religion of gratitude as especially relevant to our age.

The Poetry Society's Pocket Book of English Poetry, adequately described by its sub-title, " A Collection of Poems Everyone Should Know " (fcp 8vo, stiff paper, 96 pp., 6d.) has had a gratifying reception and is being widely used already. Eventually it should have a record sale. It has been pertinently pointed out that probably no anthology of English verse was ever so carefully compiled as was that of The Poetry Society. It represents not one man's judgment—and prejudices. It was put together by a committee, every one of them saturated with English poetry, though, of course, each member had his or her favourites. And more than one member had much more than dipped into the poetry of foreign tongues, ancient and modern, Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, Scandinavian, Italian, French, German. More than one and more than two have published volumes of verse, and more than one or two have received the hall-mark of the acceptance of their poems by great publications.

The inclusion or exclusion of a poem was settled by a majority-vote, after debate and careful consideration, not so much of what might interest those who are already lovers of poetry, but rather of what might startle and stir the man on the bus, or the shop-assistant, awakening them to the existence of a realm of beauty and delight of which they had never known. For this does happen. At a meeting of The Poetry Society recently a man told how in the trenches of Ypres, when men were going mad under the strain, he kept his sanity by declaiming gorgeous poetry, and how his pal, a Bristol scavenger, again and again ejaculated, " Go on, go on; that's fine, that's splendid." The Poetry Society wishes to do something like what the B.B.C. has done by its bringing great music to multitudes who never before knew that such a lovely thing could be, so that now errand-boys whistle melodies of Beethoven and Schubert.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

Our contributions have grown again to somewhat more than the normal proportions, and there are several outstanding poems well worthy of the award.

First should be mentioned a lyric from Brisbane, James Picot's "Ballade of the Far Away Ones," which is unusual and altogether delightful. Then there is O. C. Dougan's sombre Ode "Denunciation." This should be coupled with E. B. W. Chappelow's "In Superbram Temporis Sui," a denunciation also, but from a different standpoint. B. D.-G. Dix's beautiful work consists of short lyrics. Three out of the five awards are to men.

The awards are to:

James Picot.
O. C. Dougan.
Mary Gordon.
B. D.-H. Dix.
E. B. W. Chappelow.

Highly Commended:

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
Elizabeth Binnington, Louth;
Helen Elase Bullock, De Land, Florida, U.S.A.;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
Muriel Crighton, Chester;
E. M. Fison, Felixstowe;
I. Sutherland Groom, Clifton;
R. McKie, Hove;
A. Nicolaeff, London, W.;
Dómirall O'Conaill, Manchester;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
Constance Fairbanks Piers, Halifax, Nova Scotia;
Marguerite Pollard, Oxford;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
Janet Urquhart, London, S.W.;
L. M. Watts, Plymouth.

Commended:

Mona Alexander, Halstead;
Vera Arlett, Worthing;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Irene Brittain Bell, Stockton;
M. Fancourt Bell, Sevenoaks;
Rosa A. Berry, Hucclecote;
Ann Bruce-Bibly, London, S.W.;
Evelyn Couchman, Merton;
H. Escott, Bradford;
Clare Gay, London, N.;
Marion G. Godette, Jamaica Plain, Mass., U.S.A.;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield;
A. P. Hadwen, Hupeh, China;
Irene H. Lewis, Dorking;
Phyllis Lubbock, Eastbourne;
N. Lucas, Ransbury, Wilts;
Edith Mann, Dovercourt Bay;
Norman Nicholas, London, S.E.;
B. F. Pargiter, Aldershot;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
F. C. Price, Ledbury;
Bertha M. Sheat, Bexhill-on-Sea;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate;
Zuella Sterling, Concord, U.S.A.
V. S. Staff, London, N.;
G. M. Starkey, Folkestone;
J. M. S. Stevens, London, N.;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
E. M. Weston, Selby;
Mary E. Wise, Brecon;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark.

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should be addressed to " The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before February 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) It is essential that entrants to this competition be members of The Poetry Society or registered subscribers to The Poetry Review.

The poet who spurns the rhyming dictionary is like the draughtsman who scorns to use a protractor and works free-hand. Usually the freehand poet is the most successful, but most writers, however high their lyrical inspiration, have not the vocabulary of a Shakespeare or an Edgar Allan Poe, and there can be no better way of acquiring such a grip on words than verse-writing practice with a rhyming dictionary. As very few are really comprehensive and coherent, the publication of two new ones, one English and the other American, will be welcomed by many writers of serious poetry as well as writers of light verse, and will probably persuade some mute poetry-lovers to try their hand at writing. *The Complete Rhyming Dictionary* (Herbert Joseph, 6s.), is compiled by Langford Reed, the master of nonsense-verse who with the limerick has performed what many people of this enlightened age regard as the greatest service to English literature since Wyatt introduced the sonnet. His dictionary is unusual, because it includes proper names and slang; thus *eighty* is rhymed with *Katie* and *matey*. The phonetic arrangement of the words makes reference simple. Mr. Reed, who is a Vice-President of The Poetry Society and the official L.C.C. lecturer on " The Art of Writing," will speak in defence of rhyming dictionaries at the Society's library on January 16th. We look forward also to seeing the American Rhyming Dictionary in England, where its alarmingly comprehensive nature is certain to make it the subject of much discussion.

The First Comment Treasury (Comment Press, 3s. 6d.), compiled by Sheila MacLeod and Victor B. Neuburg, who edit the Poets' Corner lately transferred from the *Sunday Referee* to the weekly magazine *Comment*, is the reply of a number of rising poets to the announcement that there was none good enough to merit the King's Gold Medal for 1935. Some writers included in this volume have already an assured reputation as poets; but most of the names are fresh. There are several who are well-known to readers of The Poetry Review, including Mona Alexander, Francis Berry, E. Casson, G. M. Hort, Una Monk, Margaret Stanley-Wrench, while Dylan Thomas, about whom storms have recently been raging, contributes a poem in his usual striking manner, and Mary Alexander, also a Poetry Reviewer, has the first place in the anthology with *King's Lynn* containing the stanza:

Trace the thin pencil spire of Nicholas,

memorial of stout burghers and their wives
who lie beneath in rows, so prosperously dead;
and sailing mark for rough, blue-jerseyed folk
who creep at sunset, under tawny sail,
the dwindling sanded channels of the estuary. . . .

We hope this admirably produced first treasury will not be the last, for the poems are representative of the best spirit of contemporary poetry.

Contributors to The Poetry Review also figure largely in the first three issues of the new poetry magazine, *The Poet* (9d.) whose aim is "to turn not away from the immortal poets dead and gone, but rather to go forward with them in continuance of their good work, and to exchange with them a fellowship of contrast, the new with the old and including in the new the old." This small and well-selected bi-monthly collection of poems should prove a most appreciated and important book for poetry-lovers who want modern poetry of a high standard published under one very portable cover without any articles of literary criticism, apart from a talented short "leader." Among the contributors, whose immortality we hope will neither die nor go, are G. M. Hort, Alice E. Collinge, E. Horsfall-Ertz, Philip Ernest Bath, Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, H. Escott and others with whom our readers are already familiar. *The Poet*, as well as *Comment*, offers prizes for poems.

"Orpheus and the Asphodel," a *Poetry of To-day* poem by Frank Letters of Sydney, is to be included in a local anthology for school use in New South Wales. The anthology, which has been chosen by one of the Commonwealth's leading English teachers, is sure to have a wide sale. It consists of fifty poems, nearly all English, with a very few Australian ones. It includes Flecker's "The Old Ships" and Chesterton's "Lepanto." One of the Australians included is Chris Brennan, who was mentioned in The Poetry Review about two years ago. Professor Randolph Hughes (London University) about the same time, wrote a small book on Brennan. "Chris Brennan is thought to be our best poet," Mr. Letters writes, "and Hughes thinks he is the greatest poet of the century, though in his life-time (he died about four years ago) he had hardly any readers. Think of Brennan, an Australian, writing Symbolist verse in the ''nineties,' before anyone had done so in England! Brennan, whom I knew well personally, whatever his claims in poetry, was the most amazing scholar I ever met. Professor Woodhouse, our Professor of Greek, told me that Brennan, who was lecturer in French and German, knew twice as much Greek as Woodhouse himself."

Deploring that so many eminent American poets departed from life without leaving a life-likeness, the Congress of American Poets, New York, has initiated a practical movement of having life-size busts made of leaders in the poetry movement. To set the example the National Poetry Council, which directs the Congress, has commissioned the eminent American sculptor, Frederic Allen Williams, of Sherwood Studio, 58 West 57th Street, New York, to make the busts of three outstanding leaders in the poetry world, as follows :

Edwin Markham, the eighty-four year old dean of American poets, author of the celebrated *Man with the Hoe*, *Lincoln*, *the Man of the People* and many other poems, who is national chairman of the Congress of American Poets ;

Alice Hunt Bartlett, American poet-dramatist, author of *Washington Pre-Eminent*, and Editor of *The Sea Anthology*, *The Anthology of Cities*, *The Dynamics of American Poetry*, etc., who is credited with having popularized over one thousand American poets abroad through her arresting presentation of their works in THE POETRY REVIEW since 1922 ; and

Percy Mac Kaye, American poet-dramatist, author of over fifty published works, including the opera *Canterbury Pilgrims*, one of the first American operas given at the Metropolitan Opera House, and numerous masques. He was the first to hold a poetry fellowship in an American college, thereby establishing the precedent which opened the way for other poets to be appointed to poetry fellowships.

KEATS : BYRON : SHELLEY.

The Poetry Society in conjunction with The Byron Society have arranged a " pilgrimage " to Rome and Venice, leaving London on February 18th.

In Rome there will be an official reception and other special meetings and courtesies, culminating in the commemoration of the 116th anniversary of the death of Keats on February 24th.

A handsome brochure, " Byron and Shelley in Italy," will be sent on application, with fuller particulars of the special arrangements which will distinguish this tour, on application to the Director of The Poetry Society.

(*To The Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—The hilarious sport of " de-bunking " is still in sufficient favour with the irresponsible to ensure a constant and lively search for victims ; and I suppose the turn of Keats was bound to come sooner or later.

Having said this, one has said all that is necessary by way of reply to Mr. Erich Taylor's curious remarks about this poet in the current issue of THE POETRY REVIEW. There remains a certain residual curiosity as to why such a series of ridiculous and dogmatic assertions —contrary, I believe, to the considered opinion of the whole of the cultivated world—was deemed fit for inclusion in a periodical of deservedly high literary reputation.

Yours faithfully,

London, N.W. 11. T. W. RAMSEY.

[We remind our correspondent that the article in question was an individual signed contribution and was deliberately described as " An American View." Apropos, we regret that certain copies of this issue were sent out with these pages blank, the printers unwittingly acting as censors.—Ed.].

(*To the Editor*, The Poetry Review.)

Sir,—It is surprising that Mr. Taylor in his uncompromising article on the sonnet in the November Poetry Review should make no mention of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Rossetti is of all modern poets the one to whom the sonnet came most naturally as a form of expression, and he has given us the best definition ever penned of what a sonnet should aim at being.

" *A Sonnet is a moment's monument,*
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead, deathless hour. Look that it be
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.

" A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul—its converse, to what Power 'tis due:
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or, mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to death."

Moreover Rossetti uses the octave and sestet form which Mr. Taylor considers to be alone legitimate,—though as to this it is surely overdaring for a critic to tell great masters like Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Keats that they did not understand the limitations of the form they were using! There is usually a distinct break between octave and sestet, in which case the sonnet is so printed as to emphasize this, but in other cases (" Retro me, Sathana ! " XC of the *House of Life*. is an example) the whole sonnet is continuous without even a full-stop at the end of the eighth line.

Rossetti adheres strictly to the a, b, b, a; a, b, b, a scheme of rhymes for the octave, but uses the utmost freedom for the last six lines. In the 102 sonnets of the *House of Life* (including the prefatory one), there are nine different rhyme arrangements. By far the most common of these is c, d, d, c, c, d, which occurs over twenty times. Next in order of frequency is c, d, d, c, e, e, *e.g.* " Michelangelo's Kiss," No. 94. In this last case and in the arrangement c, d, c, d, e, e (see the sonnet quoted above) the last two lines rhyme; but they are not a separate couplet; they are part of the sestet, just as much as in that other favourite arrangement c, d, e, c, d, e.

Nov. 9, 1936. S. R. Daniels.

THE GOLD MEDAL FOR VERSE-SPEAKING.

MR. GUY PERTWEE, in awarding the Gold Medal for Verse-speaking on November 14th, at a recital by fifteen holders of The Poetry Society's adult silver medal, said he had listened to a very interesting afternoon's work—but there was perhaps rather an air of " dread solemnity " over the proceedings. A rather more vital atmosphere was wanted. He felt that there should have been a placard behind the platform—" Abandon hope all ye who enter here." However, the audibility was much better than last May. He stressed the following points: William Pitt said " Good literature is the raw material of rhetoric," in other words, it is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of good literature before one can speak it well. The poet chooses words with regard to their association with each other. Sometimes the candidates did not quite observe this point, and spoke their lines without fully realizing the association behind the words. As to the actual production of the poems, the candidates were all extremely thoughtful and earnest in their verse-speaking, but they did not always fully understand the poem. The pattern of the poem must always be followed. The metrical musical pattern must be welded in with the meaning, and it must be remembered that for certain moods there were certain metres.

Mr. Pertwee awarded the Gold Medal to Miss K. E. Ford (Slough), Miss A. R. Robertson (County Durham), Miss M. Carnes (London), Miss E. K. Bateman (London) and Miss Sybil Clarkson (Cheam).

A distinctive feature of the brilliant new series of " Star Matinées " has been the reading of seldom heard long and other poems, the lesser-known sonnets of the seventeenth century, Spenser's *Epithalamion*, Keats's *Lamia*, Browning's *Childe Roland*, in the rendering of which both enunciation and interpretation have been superlatively delightful.

" Panic " at the Mercury again showed production well ahead of material, these experiments in verse drama being inferior to effective, strident journalese and much less convincing. Only Mr. Franklin Dyall's acting was superior to the play, yet it was material failure rather than spiritual panic that hovered in the background, that got him down. We look for more concrete definition and lucidity in Mr. Redwood Anderson's *Babel* recently republished by the Oxford University Press as *The Tower to Heaven.*

Mr. Richard Church prefaced a reading of his poems at a recent meeting of the Kensington Centre by a tribute to the modern development of poetry reading and speaking which had languished for centuries until, thanks to The Poetry Society, it had again emerged as a desirable art and practice. It was not enough for poets to see themselves in cold print. They wrote for sound as well as sight-reading and should be heard. It was encouraging to find so many qualified people were attempting to give them that hearing.

IN SUPERBIAM TEMPORIS SUI

I CANNOT dream the dreams I would,
Brave childhood's eager dreams of good,
Nor can I keep that childlike mind
Lord Jesus said we each must find
To win new life ; there is no time
In this sick age of pose and mime,
Of self-acclaim and wordy wars,
To meditate upon the stars,
The lonely stars so far and high
That glitter through eternity,
Nor, when midsummer nights are still
And heavy with musk scents that thrill
The dreamy spirit with all delight,
Watch the moon's shallop, twy-horned, bright,
Ride in the watches of the night
The lambent, lovely and remote
Arched vault of heaven no jarring note
Of day's unease breaks in upon,
But which, O, in the days now gone,
Youth's generous days, so glad, so sure,
A rapture and a vision pure,
Lured the imaginative mind
To seek therein some haven kind,
Some starlit shore whereon to rest
And find fulfilment of its quest
Of age-long heart-ache. Then it was
Orion's belt and dim Arcturus,
The Cretan Crown and Charles's Wain
Spelt wonder to the nascent brain,
Legends rehearsed of unmapped seas
Ploughed in song-haunted argosies
By demigods and deities,
And gardens where yet dreaming were
The daughters of the Evening Star,
And then it was when orient skies
Flamed to first morning's ecstasies,
We heard Apollo's harp, his even,
Flood with ethereal music heaven,
And deemèd we heard above the rim

Of kindling dawn ascend the hymn
Of cherubim and seraphim,
Dim glories dead. But now, alas,
No fairies glimmer in the grass,
No faint horn echoes from the glade
By Oberon's small henchmen made,
No paladin rides down the vale
In panoply of dwarf-wrought mail,
With nodding plume, on courser white,
From tower and turret that crest some height,
With shield uplift and lance in rest
To seek and succour the opprest.
For we, for all that we amass
Of knowledge, are but sounding brass
And see life through a clouded glass,
Nor will our soulless lore avail
To win for us the Holy Grail,
Who have with cynic sneer defiled
The simple credence of the child.
For how should wonder's rainbow gleam
Pierce through this age of soot and steam,
This age of steel and whatso-other
Age of hard metal comes to smother
The life in stem and blossom of
Art's living tree, whose dews are love.
The shining fane, the marble portal,
Porphyry shaft and frieze immortal
Which brings to earth the very gods,
Are not for us who make us rods
For our own backs by prostitution
Of too much knowledge to greed's pollution,
And bow the knee, to our own loss,
Before unliving material dross.
Homeric hymns, heroic joys,
Are cast off for mechanic toys,
And all the dreams of ancient worth
Ground down to demagogic earth.
One bright page of a missal limned
With care exquisite, one song hymned

By Ovid's proud and ageless voice,
Are worth a century of noise;
One inch instinct with art creative
Is worth a world of imitative,
And standard this and standard that,
The Mecca of the bureaucrat,
Howe'er so accurate in plan,
Suppress the living soul in Man.
The factory styles our sons proclaim
Express simplicity of aim,
Though cleanly wrought and plainly wrought,
But cover poverty of thought,
As though a petty box of bricks
And clever engineering tricks
Were meet exchange for lilied work
And cusps and canopies of York.
We have no time for cunning song,
For patient labour and the long
Ascent to beauty which doth command
The prospect of life's promised land,
But speed-without-an-aim is king,
And speed gives time for pleasuring.
O vicious circle! Speed breeds speed,
And speed's surcease is all our need,
Ere yet, an overwound machine,
Our whole economy is seen
Disrupted quite, and desolation,
The child of nation at grips with nation,
Swallows in agony and tears
The hope and harvest of the years.
Ah then for us by booming Rhine,
No Emperor Charles will give the sign
Girt with the circle of his peers,
To rise and calm a riven world's fears,
Or knit into one holy Rome
The tottering states of Christendom,
Nor yet for us will Uther's son
Come sailing home from Avalon,
From the glassy apple-island come,

Queen-companied, asailing home,
To fight a new Mount Badon for
The ancient realm he loved so sore.
Ah what of help for us will be
Our pomp of cheap prosperity,
The belching cities, the conquered air,
The Mammon of self, the laissez-faire,
The harnessing of heaven and earth
Applied to aims of little worth,
Applied to jealousy and greed,
Hate's and destruction's fertile seed,
And, worst, the hypocritical
Catchword of service to cover all
Our worshipping of stocks and stones
The savage heathen worshipped once,
Or metal, gas, and chemical ?
How shall these help us when we call
Out of the depths this hard bright age
Bequeaths us for our heritage,
Who have forgotten love, denied
The vision of the Crucified,
And banished as mere sentiment
The beatitude of sweet content,
Who could not dream e'en if we would
Brave childhood's eager dreams of good,
Who, jigging robots, cannot win,
For all our gains, a spot wherein
The soul, stripped bare of earthly aid,
Can pause and be regenerate made,
Bathed in that Spirit which renews
The spirit of Man, we who refuse
To bow to aught but barren mind,
Who, blind guides of the spirit-blind,
Both what and whence we are forget,
And throne as God a marionette ?

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW.

THE POETIC TEMPERAMENT

THAT poets are not as other men is a generally accepted truth. The prevailing difference lies chiefly in the direction of temperament rather than in degrees of potential forces of the brain. In truth, too great a preponderance of brain may wake thoughts that loom upon the horizon of infinity in such magnitude that all rhythmical beauty of expression may be overlooked.

Swedenborg is an instance; the emotional temperament was entirely subsidiary to his intellect, which in its vast peregrinations not so much heard the ebb and flow of rhythmical waves upon the shores of the universe as saw all beauty in the unapparent. In his book on *Divine Love and Wisdom*, he writes of these divine attributes as though making geological observations.

Keats is an instance of the intellect being temporarily subsidiary to his emotional forces. I say temporarily by reason of a respect I have for the poet's own words. After recording several emotions that afforded him delight, he asks:

> "And can I ever bid these joys farewell?
> Yes; I must pass them for a nobler life,
> Where I may find the agonies, the strife
> Of human hearts."

I may presume from these few lines that he recognized that the recording of emotions alone was not the complete mission of a poet.

Carlyle might well have paused before he observed that Keats was "dead dog" to him, for surely a youth of scarcely twenty-two years—at the time the above lines were written—having accomplished so much and with a further promise of achievement in the lines quoted merited kinder treatment.

One may be sure that he would have gladly suffered even the charge of being a proselyte to "flunkeyism" had he known that Shelley would sing "a dirge for him, the doubly dead, in that he died so young."

"The sweetest lyrist of his saddest wrong" surpassed himself in writing *Adonais* amidst a total abandonment to grief.

Tennyson united strong emotional forces with an acute intellect, a fine judgment in the selection and omission of images, and great dignity and beauty of expression.

A diverse richness of temperament, or that part of it which may be called sensibility, has invariably been possessed by the greatest poets. Without this the most acute and incisive intellects can seldom hope to write poetry that is above mediocrity, although no conclusive proofs can be deduced to justify its relegation to a lower position in our minds. The best proof is to take up one of the lesser poets and to find a passage expressing an emotion which we know has been expressed by a master mind: the difference is easily recognized. The one writes in a cold, yet possibly in a very polished style, unconvincingly by reason of his nature not having felt such an emotion, or one similar, in its rich entirety.

The other records an experience with warmth: its memory alone is sufficient to quicken the pulses of the brain. As surely as a bird knows by instinct where to find materials from which to weave a nest, the poet turns to strange unfrequented sources, finding there food for his life within dreams, and shuns the ways of the many.

His knowledge may be empirical, yet in the fulness of his spirit he will sometimes touch the highest truths. It might then be truly said of him, he knows not what he utters. When the imagination is fervid it is possible for the poet to write something to which he may not be able to attach a satisfactory meaning a few days later, and years after men will interpret those particular passages in such wise that the writer might deem himself dispossessed of them, for no such train of thought was in his mind at the time they were written. At such periods the poet is under the governance of his inspiration and speaks beyond himself.

It may be doubted whether Burns had a sound knowledge of any one system of philosophy, and yet his poetry is the proudest possession of a people. His secret lay in writing from the heart, and not from the intellect.

Emerson somewhat deplores a too great devotion to the intellect at the expense of the emotions in an essay on " Old Age."

"We postpone our literary work until we have more ripeness and skill to write, and we one day discover that our literary talent was a youthful effervescence which we have now lost."

The poetry of Emerson certainly has little effervescence, and does not strike one as bearing the mark of spontaneous utterance, and therefore loses the chief charm of verse; but his essays should rank among the glories of literature.

Swift mistook verse for a medium for satire, and failed in the province of poetry.

Byron was never so much a poet as when he ceased to write cynicism of the intellect and outpoured the feelings of his heart.

The *Lycidas* of Milton, expressing sadness of regret at the death of his friend King, will stir thousands of souls on whom the sublimity of his great epic is quite lost.

Shelley, in his *Alastor*, has given us a most beautiful picture of the poetic temperament, and we can easily believe that this poem is a record of his own exquisite sensibility.

Goethe—the first man to fully elucidate the character of Hamlet—in his drama *Torquato Tasso* presents us with an interesting portrayal of the peculiarities of the poetic temperament.

In hours of gloom and dejection the majority of men will seek society or some amusement to dissipate the clouds that sink so suddenly; not so the poet, who knows them for the best, recognizing that in such hours the spirit suffers a greater expansion, and when bound by the deeps of desolation becomes stronger, loftier, and more universal in its aims.

Is there time and room enough for the rich resources of the mind to repose and enlarge themselves if an incessant restlessness and hunger for amusement for ever subverts any high resolve?

The poet is essentially eclectic; where most men eagerly accept the smallest pleasure offered without quesuioning the same in relation to the future, he will refuse it, knowing that such an experience can be of no service to him.

The poetic temperament may present to the ordinary observer few of those beautiful attributes so often insisted upon in poetical creations. In place thereof a certain selfish irritability may manifest itself, and quite disregardful of those small amenities of which an aggregate is happiness to many, the poet passes by and keeps jealously hidden a soul intensely yearning. So well may this secret be guarded that none guess the all-consuming sorrow of a soul rushing to complete the cycle of its years with no adequate achievement marking the progress of its passage.

The tragic significance of a splendid soul wrapt in glories of its own imaginings and wasting the loftiest gifts in idle inactivity can seldom be strongly impressed upon a mind that is not of kindred sympathies. It is only when engaged on some great and congenial task that the poet exhibits a sublime cheerfulness so exultant that he seems to dally with the sun.

To severe habits of repression may be attributed the generation of that ardent and lofty enthusiasm which has impelled genius to undertake the most arduous tasks with possibly no encouragement save a self-conviction of the glory of its own conceptions. The noblest enthusiasm is often exhausted by a too frequent conjunction with the world. Speaking of society, Byron observed:—" I have been too much in a circle, especially 1812–13–14." In *Manfred* these lines occur:

> " I have had those earthly visions,
> And noble aspirations in my youth,
> To make my own the mind of other men,
> The enlightener of nations."—(Act III, Scene I.)

Byron's fame is glorious enough, and yet I cannot help thinking that if the dust of the world had not blackened that magnificent spirit and often made it " blind in unascended majesty," he might have been third of the sons of England.

The poet is often a sterner realist than the man of more prosaic temperament. This statement might seem somewhat paradoxical if it stood alone with no explanation or examples to enforce its truth. Emerson remarks:

> " The scholar may lose himself in schools, in words, and become a pedant; but when he comprehends his duties he, above all men, is a realist, and converses with things."

Swedenborg affirms that " man is not life, but a recipient of life," and

> " that the conception of a man from his father is not a conception of life, but only a conception of the first and purest form receptible of life ; to which form, as a stamen or initiament are successively added in the womb substances and matters in forms adapted to the reception of life in its order and degree."

That men are recipients of life and not life itself is a truth widely respected by Oriental philosophers. Insomuch as the human body is a receptacle of life, we can conceive that there are greater or lesser potentialities of reception according to the several degrees of perfection or imperfection of the receptacle. Shelley seems to have been convinced of this. In his *Alastor* we find :

" And what am I that I should linger here,
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf ear, to the blind earth and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts ? "

and later this passage :

" Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
That minister'd on Sunlight, ere the West
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame—
No sense, no motion, no divinity—
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
The breath of heaven did wander."

Spenser indubitably held this conviction. He writes :

" So every spirit as it is more pure
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it to the fairer body doth procure
To habit it, and so more fairly dight
With cheerful grace and amiable sight :
For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make."

If the poet possesses a frame more exquisitely attuned to beauty, and therefore more receptive of life than frames of most men, surely I am justified in thinking that he is often a sterner realist.

Of all poets Dante had the widest experience : Ambassador, soldier, poet, philosopher, and exile in poverty.

With what stern reality did this soul touch life at its extremest points. Heaven and Hell, Beauty and Hideousness, and Love and Hate conjoined within this breast. His love for Beatrice Portinari is, perhaps, the most beautiful ever recorded. Meeting her at a very early age, he gave up his soul in total surrender and worshipped her. She married, and a few months later died. That she was very beautiful is known from words of the poet, who remarks that people paused in the streets to look at her as she passed by in very humbleness.

Dante married with no happy result, and even evinced some affection for a third lady, to whom he addressed a sonnet, and yet, according to his own confession, he smothered this nascent flame and nurtured memories of Beatrice. The intermittent, mutable, and fanciful attachments that many men form seldom satisfy a man of this peculiar temperament, by reason of his nature needing a far deeper reality. What a picture we can conjure up of that wayward genius Byron, when a boy, rushing wildly into the night with his wounded spirit; one awful sentence, framed to mockery by the lips he loved, flooding his soul with pain. "Do you think that I could care anything for that lame boy?" If there be truth in the remark,

> "that state determines time; time is only an appearance. Happiness of state causes time to appear short, and unhappiness of state causes time to appear long,"

or, in the passage of *Cain*:

> "With us acts are exempt from time, and we
> Can crowd eternity into an hour
> Or stretch an hour to eternity."

then we can believe that Byron lived longer in that one experience than hundreds of men would have done in seventy similar ones.

Keats, laughing at the extravagances born of love, lived to marvel at the strength of passion that consumed him in his last years. In his letters he writes:

> "Oh God! God! God! If I had any chance of recovery this passion would kill me. It surprises me that the human heart is capable of containing so much misery."

Friendship is accorded and accepted by the poet on a nobler basis than a mere participation in pleasures and an escape from ennui. Though a similarity of professions or pursuits may not be necessary, a movement on the same plane of thought or enthusiasm must exist to inspire a friendly attachment that passes beyond the confines of acquaintanceship. Hear Goethe's words :

> " At this time all within was fermenting and seething in the first action and reaction. Fritz Jacobi, the first whom I suffered to look into the chaos, and whose nature was also toiling in its own extreme depths, heartily received my confidence, responded to it, and endeavoured to lead me to his own opinions. He, too, felt an unspeakable mental want ; he, too, did not wish to have it appeased by outward aid, but aimed at development and illumination from within. I could not comprehend what he communicated to me of the state of his mind, so much the less, indeed, because I could form no idea as to my own. Still, as he was far in advance of me in philosophical thought, and even in the study of Spinoza, he endeavoured to guide and enlighten my obscure efforts. Such a purely intellectual relationship was new to me and excited a passionate longing for further communion. At night, after we had parted and returned to our chambers, I often sought him again. With the moonlight trembling over the broad Rhine, we stood at the window and revelled in that full interchange of ideas which, in such splendid moments of confidence, swells forth so abundantly."

I shall conclude this fragmentary essay with the sestet of a sonnet of Keats' :

" And calmest thoughts come round us—as of leaves
Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—Autumn suns
Standing at eve upon the quiet sheaves—
Sweet Sappho's cheek—a sleeping infant's breath—
The gradual sand that through an hour glass runs—
A woodland rivulet—a Poet's death."

R. HENDERSON-BLAND.

FALLING ASLEEP

ALONG a stream no more than a channel of moss
The craft of consciousness with hesitant keel
Noses a way, in water so thin-spread
I seem to sail on land. My coracle mind
Enters the dark and waiting greenery
It knows will toss in tumult when this wind
Now traitor-whispering in the leaves breaks rein.
On to oblivion tumultuous.

JANET URQUHART.

LOVE'S EASTER

BELOVED, instead of forty days, our Lent
Is lasting many lonely, dragging years ;
Our yearnings never find relief in tears ;
Our wild desires in aching hearts are pent.
Like thunderings by which the night is rent,
Our worldless prayers are din in our own ears ;
Our abstinence is as a drought that sears
The growing plants ; yet we must be content
To wait the resurrection morn ; and when
The stone is rolled away and from the tomb
Our buried love emerges stainless, free,
I know that we shall never feel again
That stifling, cold, and penetrating gloom ;
But happiness will baptize you and me.

HELEN ELOISE BULLOCK.

Scottish Gaelic Poetry

Formed in 1934 to do, with the support of leading Gaelic scholars and of others with a life-long interest in the Gaelic cause, for Scottish Gaelic what is being done for other languages, the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society report that they are about to issue their first publication. At the present time the great bulk of Gaelic poetry, both bardic and vernacular, their report states, was out of print and inaccessible to the ordinary reader. Most of it was contained in old and rare publications, and the aim of the Society was to publish all this wealth of material systematically and in a scholarly manner. Incidentally, the work involved would provide a field for Gaelic scholars, young and old, and so help to build up a school of men and women really learned in the language. One of the objects of the Society was to publish, in addition to the Gaelic text, introductions, English translations where desirable, glossaries and notes, which should specially appeal to those who, while deeply interested in Gaelic literature, were not intimately conversant with the language. The Society's first publication will comprise part of the manuscript known as *The Book of the Dean of Lismore* compiled early in the sixteenth century by James MacGregor, Dean of Lismore, and his brother Duncan, both natives of Fortingall, at the foot of Glen Lyon. The great bulk of the manuscript, which contained over 300 pages, consisted of Gaelic poetry, composed by a large number of poets, Scottish and Irish, of the utmost interest and value. The part dealt with in the forthcoming volume was that by Scottish authors. Much of it, but by no means all, was by highly-trained bards, who were familiar with all the technique of the schools.

"IT IS WRITTEN . . ."

O SON of man
heir to man's dusty burden
by birth enthralled to man's immemorable past,
what devil did depart from thee but
for a season ?
Thy full stature reached,
the petty prickings of thy mortal flesh
long mastered,
earthy appetites
little adolescent lusts
and trifling terror-born audacities,
what demoniac craving
what satanic fear
what hell-engendered thirst for domination
tortured thy loneliness
haunted thy wandering in the wilderness ?

What hunger's urgency
taunted thy godlike power to quicken
stony barrenness ?
Wert thou constrained to feed
with avid eyes on loveliness of line
and colour,
sate thyself with feasts of form
and movement and design,
tormented by the need
to stretch gigantically thy limbs
voluptuously to smother
in a vast incestuous embrace
thy mother
earth ?
Didst thou, O Master Artist, share
thy least disciple's passion to possess
all beauty ?

Was misbegotten recklessness
bred out of vaunting certainty
by crippling doubt,
and wert thou, now

exalted by the wine of godhead, now
set shuddering before the lowering draught
of human insufficiency?
Upon thy pinnacle
thinking to put high heaven to the test—
thy lovely patience momently
turned to coercive haste—
didst dream of the belief-demanding spectacle
of a miraculous descent
on angels' wings upborne?
Didst thou indeed partake
thine inspiration notwithstanding
of aught of the truth-seeker's agony
of awe-full intrepidity?

To gain what glory wert thou tempted
to overleap love's lingering pity
and take thine earthbound kin by storm?
Didst thou design
to banish with a handsweep
usurping sin,
and seize and no more yield
his long-held sceptre,
aye to wield
the wand of thy beneficence?
But through thy musing on imagined conquests
did not the lava of contempt and scorn
surge up unbidden out of burning thoughts
to scorch thy mind
sear and deflower thy soul?
Then hadst thou part, O Perfect One,
in the dark shame
and desperate self-damnation
of every faltering follower of good?

O full-grown Son of God,
in full communion with the Mind of God
and full awareness of the Will of God,
who to each devil-whisper didst return

the Word of God
and put to flight th' insidious tempter,
how could we
hemmed in by human limitations
guess the nature
of thy transcendent trials ?
Enough that for the conflict
thou hast armed us from thine own armoury :
poured into childlike ears
all they might hear
of holy secrets,
taught lisping tongues to stammer
the Word
which thou didst manfully proclaim ;
that in receiving it
in beauty, truth and goodness uttering it,
the slow-maturing younger sons of God
may come at last to birth.

MARY GORDON.

NATIVE

IT is a well-loved place,
the ridge that leans against the eastern sky ;
and he has climbed it many times
with his face set towards the light,
in the early days
when he dwelt in the holy places of the mind,
his soul spangled as the dawn
with youth's iridescence.

Now, he has come again,
and the loneliness of the wind in the silent places
pipes solace to his soul ;
Again, with gladdened eyes
he climbs, and where he steps
the plaintive lapwings rise
like phantom hopes—
yet he is glad . . .
It is a well-loved place . . .

MURIEL CRIGHTON.

COMETH AT LENGTH HOMING

COMETH at length homing
my adventured love,
findeth tranquil haven
and every wind light.

Easily answereth
to helm's last demand,
furleth sail, and anchor
long fathoms down.

Ebb and flow holdeth
now without alarm;
chart no longer heeded
nor compass animate.

Ceaseth from the lonely
and the stranger deep.
At my heart lieth
my love no more distressed.

B. D-H. DIX.

FOUNTAINS ABBEY

ONLY amid these ruin'd aisles and choir,
The immense tower lifted heavenward in vain pride,
Windows of broken transom, portal wide
Trod by devout feet in so hot desire
To behold sight-healing hallows,—or these dire
Dungeons of penance, inns where wan men died,
Bone-houses where saints crumbled, who defied
Daemonic influence or a brute king's ire:—

Only amid this mortuary of the dead,
Stone cerements once of living souls, the pall
Of the world's high ambition, and the lead
That laid the mitred abbot with the thrall,—
Survives the dark, scarce-sentient, palsied yew,
The cedar nurtured first on Libanus' dew.

T. E. CASSON.

ON JAPANESE POETRY

"Poetry is the Religion of Nippon. Through it the Nipponese people cultivate their Patriotism, Fortitude, and Love of Beauty. It is the Standard of their daily Life." (*Dreams from China and Japan.*)

As in our pictorial Art, so with our Poetry, we only require a few strokes to compose our verse. There are, apart from our longer form of poetry, two other forms which are very popular with the Nipponese: one consisting of thirty-one syllables, and the other of seventeen. These are the favourites of our people irrespective of class or caste. Even before we are sent to school, which is compulsory from the age of six years, we are made familiar with our native masterpieces—thanks to our Poetry Cards, which consist of 100 classic examples. In this respect poetry is a sort of national sport in which we indulge from the cradle to the grave. Neither education nor sophistication is essential to the production of our poets: they are a natural growth, as natural and beautiful as the seasons, the tides of the moon, and the snow that caps Fuji-no-Yama.

And by poetry must be understood the expression of an heightened sensibility comprehending all the virtues in ideal forms, and forming criteria for all generous thought and behaviour. The oldest form of Japanese poetry has served the very source of Japanese love of country, always ready to sacrifice self to the common weal.

"Umi-yukaba mizuku-kabané,
Yama-yukaba kusa-musu kabané,
Oh-Kimi no hé ni koso sinamé;
Kayérimi wa seji."

This reads in my English:

What though the sundering seas my corpse may bury in salt,
Or the gigantic mountains my bones shelter with tall, swaying grass—
I will not grudge my life; nor look back with regret
If I am permitted to die for my august Mikado!

A great number of our ancient poems have been converted into proverbial sayings without losing the exquisite charm and grace of their expression. Nobody dares to argue with you the moment you quote a well-known old poem. It serves as an axiom. It is a great silencer of all unnecessary arguments. And it very often proves a most effective weapon in debate, whether social, political, or family.

In addition to *Uta* or *Tan-ka*, and *Hokku* or *Haiku* we have *Kyoh-ka* and *Sen-Ryuh*. These are also extremely popular among all classes of the Japanese. As the terms show in our ideographic character they are irregular or comic forms of poetry. Our most popular *Uta*, known by the name of *Dodoitu* or *Hauta*, are rightly regarded as some of the most refined and subtle expressions of human feeling and emotion.

The following few examples, though but a faint reflex in my English robe, would be readily understood by the Western public, especially when they are interpreted by the maids of Yamato over their *Samisen* :

SMOKELESS FIRE

A red-hot fire of secret sorrow
Burns unceasing in my bosom :
But its cause knows nought of it—
A burning heart casts out no smoke ! . . .

Rather all harshness from my love
Than loving tenderness from another !

SPRING MORNING

Are these flowers a mist ?
Or is this a mist of flowers ?
Of what an unimagined blend
Is this Spring morning made !

LOVE AND JEALOUSY

Can you think how well I love you ?
Oh, mock me not, my Love !
So consumingly I love you
That my loving turns to hate
Of another who dares to love you ;
And perhaps still more of her
Who presumptuously refrains.

A SECRET OF SECRETS

Ah, how pleasantly intimate is our loving intercourse !
Nothing could leak out between us two :
I really wish to keep it secret for ever and aye. . . .
And yet, Oh ! how I long to tell it to all the world.

SWEET CONFESSION

With her soft cheek touching his sleeping face,
She awakes him; and blushing, cries, "I'm ashamed!"

WAYWARD LONGING

Were my wayward fancy master
I would give the cherry-blossom
The dear fragrance of the plum-bloom,
And then hang its lovely petals
On the graceful weeping willow.

IN THE FIELD

I had lost my way in the open field
Where a lovely girl was gathering
Violets under the smiling sun:
And I asked her to guide me home. . . .
She nodded and pointed the way with her flowers
Towards a spot where two gay butterflies
Leisurely fluttered in the azure.

USELESS VOWS

Though his long absence angers me,
And all my will resists his pleading,
No sooner his gay smile I see
Than—all my former vows unheeding—
His longing look my sore heart warms
And soon I'm locked within his arms.

THE LIGHT THAT STREAMS FROM THEE

O were I but your shadow I'd follow where'er you move;
And 'scape the pain of parting from you, my adored Love.
O were I thus your shadow no shade would fall from me,
And I'd be ever bathed in the light that streams from thee!

HORÉRARETÉ—THE CAUSE OF HIS DIVORCE

I knew he had a wife
And babes around him thronging:
Yet not to save my life
Could I resist my longing.
Who gave me this desire
Destined that man to fill it. . . .
Who filled me with this fire
Created him to still it.
When first I saw his face
I knew my mate for ever. . . .
And now nor danger nor disgrace
Can our strong passion sever.

We Nipponese, whether well-known or utterly obscure, can somehow manage to express ourselves in the simplest form of our common literature, which is poetry. We love to reflect our life in verse in order to kill the common enemy of all men, or to amuse ourselves in exactly the same way as our Chinese friends used to invent gunpowder—not to kill man but to kill time.

Curiously enough, we can express in poetry as in prose the milder feeling and affections of our everyday life in our own tongue without the aid of the Chinese ideograms. We are, however, obliged to resort to the latter whenever we desire to give forcible expression to the heroic spirit of revolt against tyranny, etc. As all the world knows, we Nipponese were keen admirers and appreciators of things Chinese. The ancient thoughts and ideas of China, coupled with her fine and unique art, are to our thinking perhaps more magnificent than those enshrined in Greek and Latin expression. Consequently all the great men of Old Japan were deeply influenced by Chinese literature, philosophy, and art, and found them their greatest source of inspiration.

As Chinese and English are compulsory in our school, we Japanese can read and write the two languages: but we are poor linguists so that we can scarcely express ourselves vocally with our Chinese and English as taught in Japan by Nipponese teachers. As a matter of fact, the way to the great Restoration in our country was paved by a celebrated Japanese writer in the Chinese language, who was at the same time a distinguished Chinese scholar and poet, the famous Rai Sanyoh. His work, *Nihon-Gwaisi—The External History of Nippon*—was at the beginning of the nineteenth century a powerful and stimulating plea against the old Shogunate usurpation and in favour of the Imperial Restoration.

Furthermore, Rai Sanyoh, the poet, had equally paved the way to the great victory of Dai Nippon over Tzarist Russia through the instrumentality of his poem in Chinese. According to the principle of the Confucian criticism, therefore, it might as well be said that China had made the *modern Japan*; and thus saved her from the mighty Russians. These historical facts furnish fresh confirmation of the constant influence exercised by the Chinese literature upon our highest thought; and a further strong argument for a close community of interest between the kindred peoples of China and ourselves.

The following is my word-by-word English version of Sanyoh's Chinese Poem, which he gave to Japan and the Japanese to prepare for the defence of the land, when feeling in the Far East was rising against Russia,—*an example that poetry can yet save one's country from foreign aggression*:

Though out at elbow
With half-bared legs,
Shabbily clad,
The sword we bear on our loins
Is sharp enough to cut iron:
If a man touches it
Lo! he falls. . . .
If a horse approaches
It pierces him through:
At the age of eighteen we hurry
To join "The League of Youth."

Should the Northern Guest
Dare to invade us,
What shall we offer him?
Why, fire and bolt
Are the gifts we'll bestow:
Should he be displeased
With our entertainment,
Then we will give him
Our dearest treasure. . . .
Our precious sword,
Slashing his skull.

Saigoh Takamori had also been greatly influenced by the Chinese way of expressing himself in martial spirit, when he exclaimed:

Loudly I call for "saké,"
Bold in the gleaming hall:
Five continents my spirit
Could crush in thund'rous fall—
My loyal heart o'erfills my breast;
My sword's three "shaku" long:

Out-spring my arm
And the traitors' heads shall fall in throng!

General Nogi, the Hero of Port Arthur, vented his feeling in verse in Chinese when confronted with that formidable Russian fortress, where he marched with a hundred thousand to chastise the arrogant foe:

Who said it was impossible to climb
The steep sides of this frowning, cruel fort,
This hill converted to a nameless terror . . .
Steel-clad and drenched in blood by warring hosts,
That challenged us, impregnable and insurmountable?
The sight filled all our high-strung hearts with wonder;
And spurred them to a dauntless, deathless deed.

Let us leave these warlike verses, inspired by Chinese literature, to follow the soft and peaceful aspects of Japanese poetry. . . .

Hototogisu—Cuckoo

I wake up and cast my eyes skyward
Whence comes the magic cry of the Hototogisu;
But I only see the solitary Moon
Still visible at the break of day!

The Autumn Sorrow

When I gaze at the lonely Moon
Sadness wells up in my soul
At the thought of thousands of things:
Yet surely I am not alone
In suffering this Autumn sorrow.

The Cruel Barrier

Oh, cruel Mist that chills us more
In this chill severing Dawn!
You hide him from my longing eyes
Ere yet he's crossed the lawn.

To the Weeping Willow-Tree

O darling Willow!
Thy modesty bowing
Before the wind
Surpasses praise:
Yet surely at times
Thou must be annoyed
By the tiresome gale.

CAPRICIOUS BUTTERFLY

Daintily gambolling Butterfly,
Nodding at bud and flirting with blossom—
A flower midst the flowers of my garden you go.
But none of these joy-flattered flow'rets can know
If you'll perch on her bosom
Or leave her to sigh.

OH THE FLEETING WORLD

Can this be the blossom
Whose loveliness daunted me
Three days ago?
Ah, hapless fate
Of this fleeting world!

PUZZLED

When Spring scatters bloom on each tree in the garden
How, how can I choose the one flower for my vase!

SINCERITY

If we only hold the Truth
Surely all the Gods will guard us
Without other form of prayer.

THE PAIN OF AN OVERFULNESS OF JOY

Oh, that in this world there were
No exquisite blooms to tempt us . . .
Then, surely, our minds would feel
A joy more serene and tranquil
In this all-glorious Spring!

Sometimes we like to admire the beauty of repetition of a certain word in our poems—the repetition occurring even seven or eight times in one piece:

Tsuki-tsuki ni tsuki miru tsuki wa ohkeredo
Tsuki miru tsuki wa kono tsuki no tsuki.

THE HARVEST MOON

Although there are many moons in which to view the moon—
It is only in this moon that we can see the loveliest Moon of all.

WANTED A MAN

How very few men there are amongst mankind,
Although the world is thronged with innumerable men . . .
Be men yourselves, O men! And by your example
Make men of those you meet, O men!

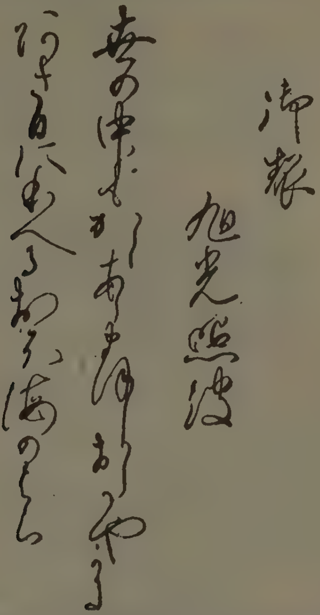
VAIN RESOLVE

Whene'er I think I'll never think of him
Whom all my thoughts adore—
The very thinking not to think of him
Makes me think of him all the more.

Once a year, at the happy season of our New Year's Day, the Emperor proclaims a certain subject for our poem, inviting all his people to send in thirty-one syllabled poems to His Imperial Court for the annual national competition. This naturally causes a universal stir and excitement both within the Land of Cherry-Blossoms and among our people abroad. A Cold Moon Shining Upon The Plum-Bloom; Cranes Upon A Pine Tree; Turtle On A Huge Rock; Uguisu, The Nightingale, In A Umé-no-Ki, Snow On The Pines; Uguisu In A Solitary Valley, etc., etc., were some of the Imperial subjects.

The Western public will certainly find it difficult to realize the extraordinary and widespread influence exercised by this Imperial inspiration, not only upon the world of poetry, literature, and art, but also upon every walk of life in which the whole Nipponese people vie with each other in the effort to create some novel and unique form of beauty. Even confectioners, for instance, in the design of their New Year's cakes, try to embody the inspiration of the Imperial choice of subject. In fact, it leads the fashion of the day throughout the country. Naturally, the daintily-designed season's kimono subtly echoes the theme of the thousands of poems on which a whole race, men, women, and children of all classes and conditions, all over the globe, are exercising their wit and sense of beauty.

Of all thousands and ten thousands of the poems sent to the Imperial Poetry Department, Tokyo, the Examination Committee winnow out a few hundred as a first selection, to be reduced afterwards into a dozen, worthy of inclusion among those to be announced at the great and solemn Poetry Celebration in the Phoenix Hall of the Mikado's Palace, the inclusion being the only recognition or prize accorded to the winners. The celebration usually takes place in the presence of the Emperor and the Empress as well as many princes, princesses, and other dignitaries of State, who have joined in the contest.



御製

旭光照波

(The Emperor's Poem specially transcribed for Gonnoské Komai by Princess Shimazu, the Aunt-in-Law of the Empress of Dai Nippon.)

KYOKKOH-SHOH-HA, THE RISING SUN SHINING UPON THE WAVES

(The original Poem in Japanese herewith by The Emperor.)

How vast is the boundless Main, perfumed by the morning
Sun,—
Fresh as primeval Dawn and still as the new-born Earth,—
Oh, would that men, too, were at peace!

In describing Japanese poetry one can never pass our Imperial family unmentioned. Some of our emperors and empresses must be placed in the first rank of writers of the shorter form of poetry, the Tanka. Indeed, several of them are now regarded as classics. However, no emperor is comparable to the late Emperor, Meiji Tennoh, the grandfather of the present occupant of our Imperial Throne—either in quality or quantity. Regarding the latter, there must be some 100,000 works by his hand, duly published in book form. As some inadequate measure of his quality let me quote a number of them in my English version.

THE HERMIT

How shall I govern my people?
Gladly I'd take the advice
Of the humblest man in my realms—
Of the loneliest hermit hid
In the remotest recess
Of a mountain yet unexplored!

THE STRENGTH OF MY WILLING MILLIONS

However daunting the task may seem
And beyond the power of man—
If I gather together
The strength of my willing millions
I feel that it can be achieved
With the ease of a boy playing ball.

A REAL POEM

The simple words of the children,
Flashing direct from what they see
Without re-touch or thought,
Are the real poems to me!

THE ENDLESS WORLD OF STARS

Happily there are no bounds,
Nor will there ever be
In the wide immensity
That holds our earth and the boundless,
Unending world of stars—
Yet on our petty earth
What countless frontiers there are!

THE BOUNDLESS BREATH OF THE SKY

Free though the bird on tireless pinions
Measures the boundless breath of the sky—
It ne'er forgets in those wide dominions
The hidden nest where its little ones lie.

THE CROWS

I sought repose in the wood
In the shade of its mighty trees;
But e'en there those mean quarrels pursued me—
Squalid crows scrambling each for a perch
In the midst of its countless boughs!

THE BUTTERFLY

Long glowing miles of flow'rs in bloom,
Whose fragrant petals all enchant thee,
Woo endlessly thy longing soul
To flutter on from bud to blossom!
Thou, too, my dainty butterfly,
By passion martyred, chase new beauty,
Nor ever sink to soothing sleep,
Nor wrap a child-like dream about thee!

In this connection I should very much like to specially mention one of the most interesting books recently published. It is entitled, *Masterpieces of Japanese Poetry, Ancient and Modern*, issued by the enterprising Maruzen Company, Tokyo, and compiled and translated by Professor Miyamori Asataro. Although there may be different opinions held regarding the quality of the translation—its merits and demerits—there can be no two opinions concerning the selection of these original gems from the common literature of the Nipponese. And certainly one can express nothing but admiration for the thoughtful inclusion in the two volumes of the lavish pictorial illustrations both in monochrome and polychrome by the great masters, new and old, of Japanese art, which in actual practice means that the picture in many cases is the work of the poet himself. Besides, all these masterpieces appear in their own native dress—Kana Alphabct—conveniently rendered readable for the foreign students in our own tongue by means of printing them in the Romanized characters as well. Surely it will be eagerly sought by many thousands of oriental scholars in the West, if only to test their knowledge of things Eastern. Certainly the book affords for the European public an inestimable insight of our instinctive love of beauty and country as well as of the native culture of Dai Nippon, transfused from the Dawn of our History, some 3,000 years ago.

To conclude, let me mention the strange fact that the Japanese people can be genuinely moved, not by force but by poetry. And we are, therefore, convinced believers in the power of poetry to move the Gods to change their will for us mortals; and even cause menacing demons to weep and cry! We are so devoted to poetry that even the very alphabet of our I-RO-HA in daily use is itself a most fascinating poem, which reminds us of the actual nature of the world we live in: colour and odour alike pass away; in our world nothing is permanent. The Present Day has disappeared in the profound Abyss of Nothingness. It was but the pale Image of a Dream. It causes us not the least regret.

To the Japanese the secret of art and poetry lies in a severe but sensitive selection, a suppression of all detail immaterial to the desired expression, for truth is more a matter of the spirit than of an exterior and superficial verisimilitude.

GONNOSKÉ KOMAI.

(Author of *Dreams from China and Japan*, *Fuji from Hampstead Heath*, *Fuji-Yama and Other Poems*, *King George V*, etc., etc.)

THE EXILED

WHEN it is evening, and the cold walls change
Beyond the curve of the lamp's little sun,
Flickered with shadows, and the night is strange
Where stars tremble to brightness, one by one,
Farther than thought or vision can devise—
We close the curtains to shut out the skies,

When it is evening, and the world is drawn
Within these four walls' space, and toil can lie
Discarded like a garment long outworn
Where the dark curtain-folds stir quietly,
And there is pause made at the end of day—
How should I know content with you away?

MARGARET ELIZABETH RHODES.

THE DRUM DOWN THE STREET

BEATS triumphant
Beats exultant
The drum, the drum.

Through streets with white lamp posts
White in grey mist
White on black pavement,
Light breaking through soot that is air
Gleaming on oil, tar that is earth—
Swinging they pass
To the beat, the beat
Swinging they pass
The drum, the drum.

Through crowds, pale necks craning
Greedy noses
Faltering eyes, twitching mouths—
Senseless and wan in the mist and the light
The soot, the oil, the tar
Smearing their souls,
The light—white on the grease of their minds—
These others swing past
Swing along to the beat,
The beat, the beat
The drum, the drum.

Above the crashing of voices
Nasal, harsh calls—cockney,
And laughter that is startled sound
And grates,
Grates suddenly shrill from a bloodless body
In animal fear, ignorance, lust—
Beats exultant—drugs and deadens
Beats triumphant—drugs and deadens
The beat, the beat
The drum, the drum.

A. NICOLAEFF.

BALLADE OF THE FAR-AWAY ONES

PITY the far-away ones, Easter time ;
Pity with gleam and rain alternately ;
Pity them, daffodil disclosing prime,
Pity them, catkin snow on willow tree ;
For pity, when grey Cornwall greeteth thee
Pity them, pilgrim bird, with melody ;
Pity and call them, call them, April sea.

Pity the far-away ones, summer time :
Pity them with black pansies thoughtfully,
Pity with yellow roses and old rhyme—
For pity, with remembered rhyme ; oak tree
Pity them with thy shadow, graciously ;
Pity them, lilac blossom ; lingeringly
Pity and call them, lovely summer sea.

Pity the far-away ones, autumn time :
Pity them in thy change from greenery ;
Pity them in thy raiment, scarlet mime—
Oh, pity them with pageant ! Damson tree,
Pity them with thy branches ladenly ;
Pity them, first fogs drifting from the sea,
Pity them, hidden ocean, mistily.

Pity the far-away ones, winter time :
Pity with snow, and cheer, and minstrelsy ;
For pity, with the carols of their clime
Pity them, Lord, in thy nativity ;
Pity them, wild night wind ; lamentingly
Pity them, as thou criest to the sea ;
Pity them, winter ocean, stormily.

ENVOI

Queen, they are far away who worship thee :
For pity, cold kind North, most tenderly
Pity them in thy rains and blossomry ;
Pity them in the calling of thy sea.

JAMES PICOT.

Brisbane.

DENUNCIATION

WE are afraid,
We, the common people.

We know the senseless fear
Of blind and savage things
That turn at bay
Against the merciless spear.
We know the futile struggle
Of the drowning
Who are swept out
On a racing tide
To their utter destruction.
Like the wild creatures of the fields
We have snarled and we have struggled,
Lifted our voices in endless lamentation,
Lifted our impotent hands in supplication
To the gods of our own making.
Like the trapped creatures
In rising rivers,
We have fought blindly, forlornly,
Against the relentless tide,
That bears us out with it,
Without hope,
And now, without question,
To our utter destruction.

We are afraid,
We, the common people.
Now no longer we struggle.
For the resignation of death,
Of annihilation is upon us.
We have no will to resist
What lies before us.
The platitudes,
The pious ejaculations
Of the priests and the politicians,
The smug placatings of our monied masters,
No longer deceive us.
We know our own putrescence,

As, trapped by the Laws
We have made and have worshipped,
We drift to our utter destruction.

What is there left to us
Of the peace,
Of the harmony,
That is above us, beneath us,
But whose whisper we scarcely can hear?
What is there left to us,
Dying and hopeless,
Of the tender, compassionate,
Image of God?
Hope of a heaven
Now is denied us,
And we are given
Systems for Religions,
Dictators for gods,
So that wildly we shout
And blindly we follow
Cæsars of yesterday
And of to-morrow,
As we drift
To our utter destruction.

We have no voice.
We are inarticulate.
When we would speak
We are ground under.
And yet our cry
Is the last cry
Of all the earth
And its people
As it nears its annihilation.
In our fear,
In our stupor,
In our terror,
In our agony,
We lift our impotent hands

To the impotent heavens.
With one voice,
We, the common people,
Over all the earth
Lift up our voice
As with one voice,
Against those who have denied us,
Against those who have betrayed us,
And led us, unwitting,
To the death that is preferred to life,
And to our utter destruction.
We, the defenceless,
The humble sheep
Whose shepherds sleep,
Or have gone whoring
After strange women,
Or grown drunk with the red wine
Of power and passion,
We utter our death cry,
Our denunciation.

We curse,
With unanimous voice,
The Scientist,
Who can but devise
New ways of cruel death,
So that we fear to live
And fear to breed,
And gone from us
Is our heritage of joy
With the safety of our days.
We curse the Politicians,
The Dictators,
Who in the name of Liberty
Have taken from us
Freedom of thought and love,
To make us puppets
Jerking blindly to their will,
So that we have fallen

From our high estate
And become sheeplike and frightened,
Stuffed mockeries of men.
With lamentation,
We weep as we curse
The Priest,
Who should have taught us,
Who should have led us,
But who sought to serve
Both God and Mammon,
And in the name of Christ
Enslaved and sold us,
And set the Law before the Word.
With blood and tears,
And death in our spirit,
We curse the Poets and the Seers,
Who for so long have denied us,
And have given but stones
To Us who ask for bread,
Who could but sing and prophesy
Of our utter destruction,
Defeated ere the battle was begun,
Who mocked us and derided,
And laughing,
Swept down our frail barriers
To leave us naked to reality,
And pointed out no new way
That we might go,
And showed us but evil and lewdness
In place of beauty and dreams.

We are afraid,
We, the common people,
As we drift,
Without hope,
And now, without question,
To the death that is preferred to life
And our utter destruction.

O. C. DOUGAN.

THE CLOCK IN THE NIGHT

WHAT is the tick, tick, tick?
It is only the ticking of your heart, old world.
Never heed it.
It is only the ticking of your old, old heart.

Oh, but I think it is a clock
Measuring off my day,
Tick-tick-ticking the seconds of the minutes
Of the hours of my day.

Yes, perhaps it is a clock
Telling off your day,
Your long, long day
Of power and glory,
Of hope, labour and fulfilment.

But never before did I hear this tick-tick-ticking!

Never before did your day go down into night, old world.
Is the clock heard against the singing of morning,
Or amidst the shouting of noon?

In the silence of the night we hear the clock ticking.
Rest, old world, and dream
Of the pride of your morning.
Of your mighty achievements
In the splendour of your noon.

But I hear it under my feet!
Surely this solid floor heaves under me!

You are sick, old world, and giddy
With overlong living,
And fearful
Of a new world pressing up under you
Like seed bursting its way.
The floor is still;
There is not a quiver or a creak in the floor.
It is silent and still
As the floor of a mortuary,

Or an old house waiting for the breaker;
As silent and still
As a gagged and bound victim
Listening to the ticking of a bomb
In a locked room.

S. W. POWELL.

THE LAST PORTRAIT

Rembrandt Van Ryn, of Amsterdam

LESS jaunty now, and greyer, and more sad;
Humble at heart, yet boastful—vastly proud
Of skill—of powers unerring, Truth-endowed.
Always defeated, yet perversely glad
Of Life's full savor, be it sweet or sour;
Of all that Time has brought for good or ill;
Asking no better than to have his fill,
(Before the passing of this hectic hour)
Of opportunity, and strength for toil;
Good ale to drink, and canvases to spoil
In trial and error—in the joy, heaven-sent
Of paint on paint in mad experiment
With light "that never shone on land or sea";
With shadow holding endless mystery.

ELISE FELLOWS WHITE.

The Dean of Durham (Dr. C. A. Alington) in the *Daily Telegraph* has pointed out that the the Desert Fathers fled to escape from "the three wars of hearing, speaking and seeing," that they might battle continuously against the evil in their own hearts. They thought that solitude and silence were essential for the struggle, and they have poets on their side. Milton tells us how

> Wisdom's self
> Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
> Where with her best nurse, Contemplation,
> She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all to-ruffled and sometimes impaired,

and, in a later day, Clough gave a warning which the twentieth century needs at least as much as its predecessor

' 'Tis but to prove limitation, to measure a cord, that we travel:
Let who would 'scape and be free, go to his chamber and think."

THE POETRY OF WILLIAM JEFFREY

MANY difficulties lie in the way of the critic who would attempt to place the poetry of William Jeffrey, one of the most baffling of modern Scottish poets. The Puritan strain, the influence of Covenanting and coal-mining Lanarkshire and its traditions have seered the outlook of this poet as they have done to others of a less imaginative trend. In trying to represent the man who has religiously carried on tradition in expression and form we find ourselves carried back, not so much to the Makars as to Milton and Vaughan, Skelton and Shelley. It is true that one would have expected to discover in Jeffrey's work a hint of the Golden Age, a striving to recover the philosophic and intellectual vision which was destroyed by the pseudo-Calvinism of the Knoxian and theocratic periods; but, instead of a distinctly Scottish note there is a definite thread of English traditionalism running through all his poetry. To the intelligent mind, however, this does not mean a denial of Scottish influences, because through the whole life-stream of literature there is a common background, and, as is well known, the high watermark of Scottish poetry was reached through the virile influence of Chaucer in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thus, it is seen that, in all of Jeffrey's work, however much he inclines towards the colourful English tradition there is a vague Scottish background: indeed, an absorbing of two traditions acquired through the study of one. It must be admitted, too, that while Scottish by birth, William Jeffrey is inherently English by nature. All his poetry reveals the influence of an early English mysticism rather than the weird elfin-like content of the Scottish poetasters.

It would appear that his poetic development, from the publication of *The Wise Men Came to Town* to the *Fantasia Written in an Industrial Town*, has been one of increasing vision, but, while that is true, an analysis tends to show that his self-expression has remained static. This, I fancy, is due to a profound taste for verbal quality. There are instances, however, where this taste errs in a liking for resonantly ugly words, for Miltonic conceits and ornate lines. These are the principal embarrassments which have followed him throughout his creative career. Poetry may perpetuate tradition through intellectual symbolism as in the poems of T. S. Eliot, whose thought reflects not so much the influence of Dante and Donne as, perhaps, the mental impressions gained by a close study of imagery. All art is based on suggestion ; originality, if we examine it, is really the old transformed by a new mental approach, or, as Spengler has said, " Every new truth that the understanding finds is nothing but a critical judgment upon some other that was already there." The point will therefore be clear when it is stressed that Jeffrey, in absorbing classicism, has derived no new experience, and that what he writes is a cerebral reproduction of what has been said before.

By that I do not infer that his emotive experiences are nil—rather the reverse. Language can originate through an emotion inspired by old truths. Indeed, the most peculiar characteristic of the poet of genius is that he can revalue old experiences and, through an imaginative process, present them in a new and forceful form. Jeffrey has done this. It cannot be said that he has to any great extent enlarged the human consciousness, but he has imparted more beauty to the body of Scottish poetry than any other writer of this age. Verbally and structurally he is reminiscent of " poets dead and gone," and therefore it is easy to understand why in a Scotland of artificial pleasures Jeffrey's work remains neglected. Like many another man of letters, his life is spent in tracing intellectual developments ; his poetry does not flash the lights of life so much as the life of the scholar. But again we must remember that a life which is devoted to scholasticism is not necessarily one cut off from the living fountain of experience. When one looks through the poetry of the so-called realists there is the definite impression that the work is a great pretence, and that it is purely an egotistical matter and nothing more. Jeffrey sees the beauty of spiritual things as well as the substantial shadow of reality. He has in this way a close connection with Shelley who, however intellectually ethereal, was nevertheless materialistic in vision. It is a case of adjustment.

In tracing poetic influences we find Jeffrey saying of the Flanders dead—" Quick-scissored in the April of their age," and we are reminded of Lycidas. At the conclusion of the First Movement of the *Fantasia* he cries:

> Endure with us, that we be salved from death,
> O Beauty, unto whom life's anchor clings !
> Thou art the Angel of the primal breath
> And hath the expanding universe suspended from thy wings.

Is that not a hint of Keats in " A thing of beauty is a joy forever " ?

It is agreed that most writers throw off early influences so soon as they reach maturity, and the poetic process, gathering impetus, gives the impression that there can be no limit to the range of expression. This discarding of inhibitions, characteristic of all great poets, has not been in Jeffrey's dowry. The merit of his lyrics is at times negatived by a devotion to musical words, and in his efforts to achieve Miltonic effects his imagination becomes ethereally rapturous. The intellectual pattern upon which he works is a never-changing one, and while the *Golden Stag*, *Eagle of Coruisk* and the *Fantasia* are related to one another, their design has a sameness which anchors the reader's imagination. It is, I think, a pity that Jeffrey has too great an historical sense, which, as Nietzsche pointed out, hampers art. Where the poet achieves individualism, unerringly soars into the spaciousness of complete self-expression is when he forgets all that he has read, and writes out of his own consciousness: expresses what Yeats has so admirably termed the purpose of all poetry, " the inner life."

So far I have attempted to outline the characteristics of Jeffrey's poetry. It may be admitted that they are similar to other writers', but it must be noticed that, unlike these poets, William Jeffrey has no self-interest, no passion for analysing his own personal attitude to things. The passion, the voice which urges him to write is a universal one. His ideal is not narcissistic in origin, it is rather an embodiment of all higher thought, a submerging of the ego. Nowhere is there the revelation of an egotistical aggrandisement. It has been assumed by irresponsible critics that because he has been unable to give complete articulation to his thought that Jeffrey lacks the illumination of the true poet. That view is refuted if we but take the example of Shelley who, while essentially narcissistic, poured into his poetry ideals which were inevitably universal but which were never fully or satisfyingly expressed by the poet. This lack of lucidity in Shelley's case was due to an impure philosophical doctrine, a doctrine made up of Plato, Hume and Godwin. I think the comparison is justified, especially when we consider that the intellectual incoherence of which Shelley has been so much accused is similar to that made against Jeffrey. Mr. Eliot has said some foolish things in his day, but nothing can be more fatuous than the remark in *The Use of Poetry and The Use of Criticism* that all of Shelley's work is intellectually obscure. Being a poet, Mr. Eliot might have recalled that fine paragraph in Patmore's *Religio Poetae* in which he says:

> The most peculiar and characteristic mark of genius is insight into subjects which are dark to ordinary vision and for which ordinary language has no adequate expression. Imagination is rather the language of genius: the power which traverses at a single glance the whole external universe, and seizes on the likeness and images, and their combinations, which are best able to embody ideas and feelings otherwise inexpressible: so that the "things which are unseen are known by the things which are seen."

And that, I feel, is a complete vindication of all poetry where the notional idea is shrouded by the deep language of the mind. It does not, however, vindicate a form of poetry in which words and pattern become chaotic and merely experimental. The value of all modern poetry lies in its closeness to the human mind, in its diffusing of a spiritual conception common to the reader as well as to the poet, and where the beauty of emotion and imagination, inarticulate in the herd mind, is made real by the creator. True poetry, like true religion, is born of the spirit, not of flesh and blood; and it is most often found that where the poet forgets self and weds emotion and imagination, the flesh and blood of life will inevitably find its true place. Again, the ultimate end of poetry, it seems to me, is not so much a matter of self-expression as a search for the Absolute, a winding in and out of innumerable pathways until the one which leads to loveliness and truth is eventually traversed. So long as there are writers who have not refined their experiences and who have no conception of the simple lucidity of true poetry literature will remain static and blemished by blobs of inscrutable verse.

Of all Scottish poets to-day, William Jeffrey shows most clearly a finer instinct for the beautiful, and it may be that while he is diaphonous and aureate, qualities characteristic of the fifteenth century, he has contributed a more melodious note to the body of Scotland's poetry than any other contemporary. Despite philosophic incursions the value in all his work lies in the melody, as in the Elizabethan lyric, and where at times one is caught in a polychromatic stream of words and the thought becomes difficult to unravel there rises from the content a tune which is fascinating, almost hypnotic. An example of this will be found in his most important poem, *Fantasia Written in an Industrial Town*, where in the Fourth Movement he says:

Night wind wind of night night wind sweeping
Tell us O tell us of Venus weeping
Weeping in darkness in darkness weeping

For judgment fallen, the sword o'er Eden
Flashing in anger and now no more
Seen of men by wood or shore.

Around the gables slip thy coils
Moistened with sap of many soils
And tell us O tell us
                                        Wind of night sweeping
                                                of Venus weeping
Weeping Venus mother of nations,
Womb and nipple of man's creations,
Wildered now in lamentations.

Throughout the whole Movement, which is remarkable for its metrical pattern, that refrain is repeated with telling effect. " Weeping in darkness in darkness weeping " has a Swinburnian touch about it, but it is really one of those devices common to the ballad, and Jeffrey, with his innate tragic conception, has used the model with success. The old Border ballads with their lyrical quality and veiled meanings, so finely imitated by Rossetti in *Sister Helen* and in *Troy Town*, offer a wide field to the poet. It is a pity that Jeffrey in his study of the two Makars, Dunbar and Henryson, did not acquire the artistic necessity of consistency. His work is inclined to be devious ; at times we are thrust into realism, then we are in the heights with his " Asian bird," and, quite as suddenly, we are cast down into a veritable inferno. This inability to concentrate is the *real defect* in his poetry. He seems to be ever in a conflict. Emotion clouds his reasoning, and the vision which seemed so near, so desirous of interpretation becomes vague. One might almost say that he is unable to identify his language with his thought. This, however, takes us into a pathological study of language which, at the moment is out with my purpose. But, let it be noted that the lack of control is what prevents Jeffrey from being truly classical. He has tried in his *Fantasia* to render an imaginative interpretation of life, tried to show that Victorian industrialism has deterred the Scottish soul: yes, but he has sacrificed his conception to musical detail, thus losing that resurgent unity which is notable in all great Greek poetry.

One might say with Sir John Squire in his essay on Robert Bridges that " words and music are with him always inseparable " with the exception that Bridges could present them with an artistic clarity whereas Jeffrey leaves elucidation to the reader. In *Eagle of Coruisk*, a lyrical symphony, and, by the way, an introduction to the *Fantasia*, Jeffrey's predilection for particular words is there in full force. The poem is too adjectival. We have " fire-scarr'd Coolin wild," " wingless contemplation," " eternal flower," " Timeless power," " berried calm," and so on. There is also a tendency towards cacophony. In going over *Eagle of Coruisk* we find lines which are musical and no more.

This melodic idolatry possibly accounts for Jeffrey's repetitive habits. On page nine we have:

> Eternal spirit, I am thine, thou mine!
> In me thou dwellest as I dwell in thee;

and then on page thirteen:

> The wings of life are darkness, light;
> And I am darkness, thou art light;
> Yet out of thee I take my being,
> My tendons, talons, blood and seeing;

Our subject's vocabulary is comprehensive, but for some unknown reason it is limited when we come to rhyme. He shows a preference for the word " gong " which is repeated almost ten times in one poem. And then he falls into the habit of writing a couplet like this:

> I'll tear thee in my talons, heart of flowers,
> Till thou shalt lie like lilies after showers.

which is no doubt very charming, but has no æsthetic point. His language can be passionate and at times very beautiful, but there is an apparent lack of idea. It is agreed that great poets use words concretely, going back to their very origin, indeed, not unlike that great Sanskrit grammarian Panini who traced his language back to two thousand roots, and which recent philologists have reduced to a little under three hundred roots. That is the secret of Italian poetry; it reflects an intensity of word craft which very few of our own poets have emulated. Dante reveals the Italian tidiness for careful building, and the detail of the *Divina Commedia* never overlaps the pattern but is consistently kept within bounds. It is difficult to concentrate on work which is purely musical, difficult to appreciate whatever beauty may lurk in this:

> Be gone! The soft Atlantic breathes
> Upon his April-cradled bed,
> And fragrance of his body wreathes
> In triumph round thine icy head.

In reading this Scot's work I have the impression that he is bravely trying to simplify the mysticism which is a part of his nature. He has said somewhere that true mysticism is simple, easily understood, and I think that this thought is constantly before him when he is writing. But duality of thought deters simplicity, and the belief matures that if Jeffrey would let himself go his self-expression would flower untrammelled. At present his conception is clouded by striving for effect. He writes about history, its effect upon this generation, alludes to unemployment and, having written some fine verse, he says:

A tremulous murmur of voices,
Of wheels on cobbled stones
Comes from the heart of the Burgh,
Where the War Memorial moans
When the wind is measured at gale strength
And the forest oak tree groans.

The pattern is Skeltonic, but the rhymes! And then again in the same poem he writes delightfully, philosophically about the earth being

. . . broken by the plough,
And still the lover winneth to his goal;
Eternity is even here and now,
The blossom that escapeth death's control.

However, he is moody, at times truculent, given to spasmodic composition. He is primarily a lyricist as witness this early composition with its Blakean tone:

Beating a hollow bone
Across his scraggy knee,
A toothless Ancient sits
Under a dark pine-tree.

Above him bright clouds move,
And past him people flee,
Yet graven to the earth
He sits, and beats his knee.

He lifts the fleshless bone
And beats a hollow knee,
While endless ages come
And flicker past the tree.

A concentrated passion is there, a beauty which sinks into the consciousness and makes us dwell upon the poet's vision. In the slight *Siren's Song* Jeffrey reveals a delicate ear for tempo, but he mars the piece for those conversant with his poetry by slipping in such a tattered phrase, "When Silence slips her thong." It appears again and again in the body of his writing. Here it is:

What song the Sirens sang
No mortal ear now knows,
(Is not Ulysses dead
And withered Sappho's rose ?)

Yet Love, the true heart cries
When Silence slips her thong,
Doth hear beyond the sense
Frail echoes of that song :

And were the heart more pure
Than mortal hearts can be,
The song the Sirens sang
Were Love's own melody.

Then in the Third Movement of the *Fantasia :*

Above the din
In voices thin,
Attend the contemplative song
That life intones
In mental zones
To souls that slip the bestial thong.

It is nearly as irritating as "Quick-scissored in the April of their age," and "My shadow clips thee from the sun." This partiality for derivative language is a trick, one might say, common in the primary classes of poetry, destroying freedom of thought, the unity and strength of movement.

I think I have stressed the principal weaknesses, and now that we have touched upon the surface there are some important points worth noting. Taking the complete works of Jeffrey, I think that *Fantasia Written in an Industrial Town* is the best thing he has attempted in English. His satirical asides are superb and very nearly as good as Burns's effects. Take this from the *Fantasia*:

Switch-over swift ! From ghosts sedate
Who sit like men who meditate
Upon affairs of abstract State,
Behold them now in Mickey form
Riding the jazzed Valkyrian storm.

The yellow bones go click, click, clack;
Tri-jointed fingers whack, whack, whack;
Delirium tremens at each back
Pries his prod with jovial smack;
Did ever Mouse so writhe and twist
The lithe cartoon upon light's wrist?
Pit, pit, pit-a-pat!
A ghost's a ghost for a' that!
(Here the Burnsian chorus sing!
See the jauds and callants fling
Skull and pelvis, spine and toe
Fast as the Hielan' chanters blow
From platforms in the clouds above,
Where Nick is sportive with his love!)
Skirl, whirl, birl, twirl:
Here's a sight for boy and girl
Drunken from the Hippodrome
Reeling to their slum-lane home!
Here's a sight for bovine priest
Whose belly has with years increased,
Whose store of Christ has shrunk until
'Tis smaller than a dry man's gill!
Ha! Ha! Ta-ra-ra!

The surface of satire can be acquired through imitation, but the depths can only be attained by one who has, as it were, the natural instinct for invective poetry. It demands a mental discipline, and we find that when Jeffrey applies himself to this thought-vehicle his poetry becomes clear and intelligible. The above-quoted passage is magnificent satire in the best Burnsian tradition. The whole poem reveals remarkable metrical skill, but there are numerous instances of lax craftsmanship. A first reading of the book imparts the impression that a great deal has been hammered out of finest marble and that other parts are just so much dented blocks of wood. And it is this, I fancy, which prevents the work falling into one complete poem. The seven movements have a thin connecting thread, but there are moments when that thread is stretched dangerously far. One of the most remarkable instances of pattern building is to be found in the mnemonic literature of Finland, where the Kalevala, comprising numerous poems, was handed down, we are told, with no attempt at preservation; and yet when these poems were pieced together they made one beautiful monument of craftsmanship, without any distortion. One wishes that our poets, who are far better equipped than the peoples of Mesopotamia, China and India were, could in the writing of long poems remember that the basis of all such writing should be consistency and clarity. I do not infer, however, that Jeffrey in the *Fantasia* lost sight of his foundation stone, but I do declare that he did not make every brick thereafter truly and soundly laid. The qualities of a poem, apart from language, lie in the technical brilliance of the poet, in his casting of imagination to fit the æsthetic mould. Therefore the thought suggested by Jeffrey's work is that each poem stands by itself, and that when pieced together into what he terms a lyrical symphony the principal idea is lost. To my mind the most brilliant part of his *Fantasia* is the Seventh Movement. Here we have an almost Biblical poem dealing with creation and man's intellectual development. The movement is written in rhymed Alexandrines to a Terza Rima pattern, and is the first of its kind in English poetry. One notices the Lawrentian touch in the first phrase:

> Look! We have come through. The east, a platinum blonde,
> unveils her slender whiteness to the rising sun,
> a wind upsprings, the fog retreats from lane and pond,
> and streams of light across basaltic chimneys run
> oblivious to grim and innate ugliness
> or, careless, drawing rose from ashes, perse from dun
> as is the way of Nature, who, devoid of stress,
> uprears from calcined bones the vermeil rose
> and decorates the desert in a golden dress.

That is a very fine passage, and the last two lines are extremely beautiful. How I wish that Jeffrey could exercise the same control throughout the body of his poetry.

There is in this Seventh Movement a condensation of idea nowhere found in any other part of the poem. It might appear that the melody is all surface, but by allowing the words and the metre to sink into our consciousness and leaving them there, for a moment, the beauty of what the poet is trying to express arises and reveals to us the façade of an exquisite art. The only point with which one might quarrel is that Jeffrey still adheres to the Keats-like adjectival phrases, phrases which shadow the poetic concept. All poetry should demand of the reader a contrite spirit, a humble attitude towards something which requires complete mental abandonment if we are to appreciate the spiritual depths. One might almost say with the Psalmist that the spirituality of art can only be appreciated by actual spiritual surrender, and even then there are horizons unseen. It must be admitted that Jeffrey's poem—and how great it is in some parts—will never be fully understood.

There is one department of this poet's work which I have deliberately kept to the last. I refer to Jeffrey's dialectic excursions. It is interesting to find that in writing the language of Dunbar and Henryson, or, for that matter, any of the Scottish Chaucerians, a greater mental discipline is required. Here is a language which has qualities English can never hope to rival. One word expresses so much that its use demands such a vigilant mind and a textual compression that I feel the writing of vernacular poems is a positive danger. The elasticity of the English language is well known, but Scots is brittle, and the poet who attempts anything in the what is now an artificial language must be a master of technique. If we take Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid*, we realize that, apart from the purely imaginative angle, the metrical and verbal technique enhance the poem considerably. That blend of allegory and the court poem, *The Thrissell and the Rois*, achieves its distinction not through brilliant intellectualism, but because of metrical mastery. One could quote many mediævalists, but what I do wish to stress is that without the essential technical equipment any experiment to-day in dialect is a waste of time. Every artist, Wordsworth says, has to create the taste by which he is enjoyed : can anyone, even Mr. Hugh MacDiarmid with his Synthetic Scots, imagine the Scottish public acquiring a taste for this :

When Merche was with variand windis past,
And Aprile had, with her silver shouris,
Ta'en leave at Nature with ane Orient blast,
And lusty May, that moder is of flouris,
Had made the birdis to begin their houris
Amang the tender odouris reid and white,
Whose harmony to hear it was delight;

No one can deny the beauty of word selection, but too much is required of the reader. Poems in dialect have their place in history; they have no æsthetic pinnacle in the twentieth century. My purpose, however, is not to lament Jeffrey's dialectical writings: I realize only too well that in *Sea Glimmer* he has written one of the most beautiful of Scottish poems, a poem which could only be expressed in the vernacular. Now Mr. Edwin Muir is of the opinion that Scotland can only have a real literature of its own by writing in English, because, as he says in a recent letter, "literary English is a vehicle for the expression of many feelings and thoughts which cannot be expressed in any dialect." However much I admire Mr. Muir as a critic, I must disagree with that statement. Where, in the English language of to-day can we find such polychromatic iridescence as surrounds our vernacular? Where, in fact, can we find words which express so much in so small a compass? I do not deny that it is only through the medium of English that Scotland can hope to have a living literature, but I consider, nevertheless, that the vernacular, with its occultic background, its marvellous precision, and its almost emotional content can express the same emotional and cerebral reactions as the English tongue. This is a detour from the subject in hand, but it has a considerable bearing upon the trend of the theme. The vernacular is deeply ingrained in the Scots spirit, and the thought is suggested that the Scot can never completely isolate himself from his mother tongue and turn his attention towards English.

There are only four poets of any importance in Scotland —Hugh MacDiarmid, William Soutar, Lewis Spence and William Jeffrey—and it must be admitted that their best work has been done in the vernacular. There is a weird elfin-like content about dialect which standard English does not contain. The gnomic qualities of present-day poetry in England, as in the lovely creations of Walter de la Mare, are more of a refined mysticism rather than occultic.

Now I have said that Jeffrey in his poems in English lacks consistency despite his study of the Makars, a study which inevitably drives home the need for one continuous notional idea in the context. When we come to the poems in dialect, however, there is the pleasurable surprise of finding the poet writing along the straight pathway which his opening lines illumined. In *Sea Glimmer*—and I cannot help feeling that it may come to be regarded as the greatest poem written in the vernacular—there is the technical mastery, the selection of colourful words and the traditional pattern. It opens:

Sair gruppit by the flesh, and wraxed wi' thocht
That canna in this birlin' mappamound
Mak' sense o' stern and flouret, I was brocht
By chance or flichter o' a birdis sound
Until the faem-reach o' a muckle sea
Where mews and gannets danced in lichtsome round,
        Wi' mony a dip and bound,
And tongues o' ilka wave liglagged wi' me.

This maks an end, I cried. The ontron's here
Of oucht that could hae yielded anchorage
In all this skimmer and shallmillened steer.
A wave's green wame shall still the bluid's lowse rage,
The lassocks o' the sea shall pile the banes
Of ane that wad hae rouped an archimage
        O' signs and sayings sage
Upon th' autumnal weeds and cauldric stanes

To shield the dooming thocht frae lanesomeness
I spied me in a skaddow o' that coast
A lairach-cairn where ance wi' blithsomeness
Beilded the hunters o' the mackerel host.
The taed and horny-goloch snoovled by
Toom hearths where burly fishers ance made boast
        O' midnichts tempest tossed,
Their ears aye thrumming wi' the thunder's cry!

Now these hae nae remembrancer in time ;
Nae trumpetour, I cried, o' royal estate
To peal them forth ; nae bard to guile wi' rhyme,
Preserving frae the universal fate.
And sae I looked agen, and lo ! I saw
Upon a bank there, beauteous and blate,
        Her heid wi' floures ornate,
The goddess o' the fremit watergaw.

Forfochen is the man that canna fin'
Enchantment in a wraith that meets his e'e,
Engenrit by the braid and busteous win'
Frae caves and shielings o' the emerant sea !
Thou goddess ! weel I kent thou wert but air,
An image that had taen the hert o' me,
        Yet I reclaimed through thee
A mood I had deemed lost for evermair.

Sae sped the chaos like a drive o' leaves
In gowd o' autumn, till the braid warld rose
In skeily order, like a field o' sheaves :
The reid land there, and there the soople rows
O' sun-looed waves, and yonder in the lift
The siller seamews and the vapour floes ;
        All herdit close as does
By that rare image in the flowering shift.

That is a poem to ponder upon. To appreciate it fully it must be read slowly with every word entering the mind like a shaft of light. Jeffrey has avoided all the dialectical pitfalls, and the only fault I can see lies in the predominance of ellipsis. It is surprising to realize that in this poem Jeffrey, had he written it in English, might have choked each line with ore, turning the conception into the very wraith about which he writes. The fact is, and it applies to every poet, dialect restricts the mind from wandering, pins it down to the subject ; indeed, artificiality is easily traced in vernacular, and the poet who attempts to use it as a vehicle for his thought must have something to write about—must write with vision.

A. McCALLUM SMITH.

"MODERN" ENGLISH POETRY

The predecessors of the modernist school of English poetry, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Wilfred Owen, were the subjects of one of Professor V. de Sola Pinto's Extension lectures at University College, Southampton. It might seem strange, said Professor Pinto, to include the work of a poet who died in 1889 among contemporary literature, but it was not only because publication of his poetry was delayed until 1918 that Hopkins had a good right to be called a modern. It was because of the remarkably original and indeed revolutionary form and style of his poetry, which was quite unlike that of his contemporaries, and which anticipated many of the qualities of post-war poetry. In his life-time only a few discerning critics recognized Hopkins' work as great poetry; others who saw his manuscripts thought them merely odd, the strange productions of an eccentric Roman Catholic priest.

While revolutionaries might not be the greatest poets, they provided the foundations on which the geniuses of poetry could build; without the revolutionaries there was no progress, for their work kept art alive and prevented it from lapsing into dull, academic conventionality. Hopkins, in his life-time, was a literary outcast. He was cut off from the majority of his fellowmen by his religion and vocation, and in his poems he was using an idiom as yet only dimly understood by a few.

He was a poet with an amazing sense of the power and possibilities of language, which he regarded much as a painter regarded colours or a musician sounds—as a medium appealing to the imagination and senses. Instead of writing about things, as the rhetorical poets did, he expressed things. He filled language with the significance of the visual arts, so that it might make an immediate appeal to the mind. His technique could be illustrated by a line from "The Wreck of the Deutschland," in which he gave them a vision of "sea flint-flake black-backed." Thus he tried to convey several ideas at once, giving them an immediate impression of the sea's cold black horror. "Father Hopkins," Prof. Pinto declared, "was a fiery, passionate spirit, a poet with deep feeling, with intense religious conviction, and with a profound sense both of the beauty and of the tragedy of life, and a burning sincerity."

Wilfred Owen was another poet whose fame had come after his death. His genius was just coming to maturity when he was caught up into the whirlpool of the war. The horror of the war transformed this sensitive poet and gave him subject matter for the great and terrible work by which he was remembered. His great legacy to poetry was what might be called the social conscience—the use of poetry not merely to express one man's feelings but the tragedy of whole masses of men. His pity for his fallen comrades was no sentimental thing but a passion almost frightening in intensity. All who had any illusions about the "romance" of modern warfare should read Owen's poems. It was no exaggeration to compare his *Strange Meeting* with parts of Dante's *Inferno.*

LITERATURE AND ESPECIALLY POETRY ON POLAR EXPEDITIONS

BY DR. WM. H. HOBBS.

(*Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Dept. of Geology.*)

Dr. Hobbs' recent important and authentic life of Peary is meeting with much commendation (Macmillan Co.). The author of this biography is a distinguished scientist who has himself led expeditions into the Arctic. Professor Hobbs' books are many, ranging in subject from geology to narratives of his own exploring expeditions, both in the tropics and in the polar regions. He is Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, Vice-President of the International Commission of Glaciers, and President of the Association of American Geographers. It will be recalled THE POETRY REVIEW was privileged to publish Admiral Peary's poem, "Roncevalles," in the May–June number (1936). Apropos, it will be remembered that our warm hearted vice-president, Sir Ernest Shackleton used to tell at meetings of The Poetry Society how he took and made use of a library of poetry on his Antarctic voyages, and that his last poem, which we published fourteen years ago, brought Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett into active association with The Poetry Society and THE POETRY REVIEW.

THE activities of most explorers on polar expeditions have been made up of life at the main base, which is always accessible to the expedition ship, and that of the far more strenuous sledging journeys. In most cases the base consists of one or more wooden buildings, which though small have room for a considerable number of books. These must be in part earlier expedition reports and scientific reference books for the serious work of the party. Inasmuch as most of the pertinent material of this nature is contained in individual volumes belonging to standard serials, and for that reason wholly unobtainable, for the great Nares Expedition to the Arctic in 1875 a special volume was published made up of reprintings of papers bearing directly on the general region to be explored.[1] A larger and much more important work was prepared along the same lines for the use of the first Scott Expedition to the Antarctic of 1901.[2] Each of these volumes was for the purpose intended the equivalent of a scientific library, and subsequent expeditions to the same general regions have had to supply in addition only the later published material.

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[1] *A Selection of Papers on Arctic Geography and Ethnology*, Reprinted and presented to the Arctic Expedition of 1875 by the President, Council and Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society, John Murray, London, England, 1875, pp. 292.

[2] *The Antarctic Manual for the Use of the Expedition of* 1901, Edited by George Murray, F.R.S., with a Preface by Sir Clements Markham, K.C.B., F.R.S., presented to the Expedition and Issued by the Royal Geographical Society, Royal Geographical Society, London, 1901, pp. 586.

There has been urgent need, however, for lighter reading material, as well as serious literature for the leisure hours, and this has been especially during the long and dark Arctic or Antarctic winter. Before the advent of radio on expeditions such literature played a dominant part in keeping down the ennui which resulted from the depressing conditions. If a fortnight only of dull, dark weather can " get on our nerves " when at home, it should not be difficult to imagine the depression of spirit which six months of near or total darkness, both day and night, entails. Hence libraries for the polar base stations of large expeditions particularly have usually been well stocked with interesting books selected with some care with regard to the needs of the men.

For sledging journeys load weights on the sledges must be kept at the lowest possible limit, and so few if any books can be taken along. Moreover, the work itself is so strenuous that the men are at the end of the daily marches too exhausted for reading, though they must post their diaries. Moreover, fuel for heat and light must be carefully husbanded and so the opportunities to read are further limited. Nonetheless, mittens must be dried and so a few moments can sometimes be caught for reading, and when the party is held storm-bound in the tent or igloo there is real need of reading matter.

The latest important sledging expedition to be completed and returned to civilization was that of Martin Lindsay, and was made up of three men who had had university training. They were each allowed to choose one book to be carried along. The choice was Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, Jane Austen' *Emma*, and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. There were in addition the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and a *Pocket Atlas*. One of the party "secreted two minute Shakespeares" and another "found" after he got under way that he had A. E. Housman's *Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems*.

In connection with Peary's expeditions a number of excellent poems were written by well-known American poets. These included Richard le Gallienne's *A Godspeed to Peary*, Percy Mackaye's *Peary at the Pole*, Henry L. Chapman's *Peary of Bowdoin*, Elsa Barker's *The Song of the North Pole Flag*, and *The Frozen Grail*, and a sonnet by Alice Hunt Bartlett on the unveiling of the Peary Memorial at Arlington in 1922. Still later there resulted from a prize contest on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the attainment of the Pole *Farthest North* by Josiah Bond and *I Talked with Peary* by Angela Morgan.

The Frozen Grail was written on the eve of Peary's final expedition and he carried it to the Pole in a little sack which held his notebooks and was attached to the upstanders of his sledge.

The untimely death of the brilliant young English Arctic explorer, H. G. Watkins, produced the tribute by F.E.C. which is here reprinted from *The Polar Record* of January 1933:

Regretting you, because your years were splendid
Beyond a brilliance we shall ever know,
We, whom your fineness stirred, who saw you go
Smiling, as one who by the gods stood friended—

What shall we say to those whose hearts unmended
Are poignant-sad, with all fair hope laid low?
Speak praise? No glory of an afterglow
Can compensate for brave clear sunshine ended.

What comfort, but to say we envy you,
As when we saw you start, adventure-glad,
Your face towards the stars that guard the north.

You loved your fated way. We envy you
The life of swift fulfilment that you had:
The tragic fitness of your passing forth.

At least two polar explorers have written poetry. Peary's *Roncevalles*, which was written while in college, has been printed in the May-June 1936 number of this journal. One of the great figures in polar exploration has been Dr. Edward Wilson, who perished with Scott in the Antarctic.

His beautiful *The Barrier Silence* is here reproduced from Seaver's *Wilson of the Antarctic.*[1]

The Silence was deep with a breath like sleep
   As our sledge runners slid on the snow,
And the fate-full fall of our fur-clad feet
   Struck mute like a silent blow
On a questioning "hush," as the settling crust
   Shrank shivering over the floe:
And the sledge in its track sent a whisper back
   Which was lost in a white fog-bow.

And this was the thought that the Silence wrought
   As it scorched and froze us through,
Though secrets hidden are all forbidden
   Till God means man to know,
We might be the men God meant should know
   The heart of the Barrier snow,
   In the heat of the sun, and the glow
   And the glare from the glistening flow,
As it scorched and froze us through and through
   With the bite of the drifting snow.

The introduction of radio into polar exploration, while it has been of the greatest value and not least important in overcoming the loneliness and consequent ennui so inseparable from the earlier expeditions, has also removed the opportunities for quiet contemplation, with the consequence that poetry is likely to figure much less in connection with later expeditions.

* * *

Poetry was a tonic and had a curative effect, and its graces should be an invaluable ally to teaching. This remark was made by Mr. G. A. Lawrence, headmaster, Demonstration School, Aberdeen, in an address on "Poetry in the Primary School," to the Educational Institute of Scotland. Mr. Lawrence said that not long ago one of H.M. Inspectors of Schools had said, "Too much attention was being paid to grinding and not to the graces." Poetry was one of man's earliest accomplishments, and was the product of man's artistic imagination. It elevated the pupil, and inculcated moral purity, and therefore should be in their school curriculum. Selection of poetry for study should be made according to the age of the pupils, who were considerably changed in their susceptibilities when they reached the post-qualifying period. He approved of taking selections by the pupils if their selections were beautiful.

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[1] George Seaver, *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic, Naturalist and Friend*, with an introduction by Apsley Cherry-Garrard, John Murray, London, 1933, p. 241.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXV

VIRGINIA MOORE'S lyric gift, as expressed in *Homer's Golden Chain* (E. P. Dutton Co.), is romantic and persuasive. She says, in her Dedication, of Poetry:

"More and more I prize in Poetry that which wells up in the deep springs of being; and more and more distrust the brain's clever, and sometimes brilliant, manipulations. The modern world in which the stream of Poetry is running thin and dry needs above all else a flood of song. For we are not preachers of a day, nor of this earth only; and, natives of the spirit, whether the impulse is recognized or not, hunger like exiles for our native air."

"Fine Linen," which opens this collection of some eighty pages, follows:

Fine linen I could strip me of,
Good bed, and delicate food,
Freedom of body, and its love,
And fire, when cold is rude.

But I must cherish every hour
The heart's love, spent again,
Simple songs, a common flower,
And the memory of great men.

I never liked to bathe in lakes
But lie along the sea
And let the mighty breakers break
Their fury over me.

Turning the pages we are arrested constantly by the charm of these lyrics. "Destiny" is another poem we wish to remember:

The rose fulfils its destiny as rose,
The blackbird as a bird;
I would not change for any easier one
My life as it occurred;

Nor change my death, whatever it will be,
And on whatever date:
The soul, that pilgrim coming down the wind,
Chooses its own fate,

And when it cries, "Oh take away this cup!"
Knows the cry profane.
The cup if shattered to the marble floor
Would fill up bitter again.

A gallant assurance of the spiritual side of man we find in Miss Moore's "Naked We Come":

Naked we come and naked as a sword
We cleave this world that we may enter the next.
Look! the smallest grasses are adored
By the living air. Nothing can we reject.
Everything's holy, most of all, ourselves.
We are divine. Yet ask not what we are.
I only know we are naked as the fells,
Exposed and pitiful as one in war.

I know! I know! Quit hugging to breast a lie.
No cloak is dark enough to hold our brightness in.
Can you not see we are terrible creatures—I
And you, and the meanest man who has been,
And where we are going nobody rightly knows
But gorgeous the thoroughfare for everyone who goes?

Harold Thompson Rich, in answer to my letter, makes a brief and very significant statement about poetry. It follows:

> "I think, however, if I must say something, that the best thing for a poet to do is to avoid prose wherever possible—and that word speaks for itself."

In his first book, *I Come Singing* (Bruce Humphries), there is poetry. The artist's eyes recognizing beauty, the ear of the musician cadencing enjoyment of the phenomena of life, both visible and invisible. "April Nocturne" we quote:

The lithe air
Leans to me like a dancing girl,
Cool-lipped and languorous
In the new night.

Down a vague avenue of dusk we grope,
Bare-footed in the wet grass.

Over the frosty hedge
A star hangs like a lantern,—
Though I stand on tiptoe,
I cannot touch it!

There are fine sonnets in this collection. One, "To Dreams," we give:

Dreams, those strange mistresses of furtive hours
Away from the dull, slattern housewife, Day;
Dreams that like orioles among grave flowers,
Lilt their forlorn, forbidden roundelay;
Dreams of brave shores beyond life's ebb and flow,
Where memory's dark, Olympian surges stir,
Eternally and silently and slow,
Laving the moon, their ceaseless worshipper.

Dreams vivid as some secret tower room
Whose sinister portals none have passed before;
Dreams more exotic than that dread night bloom
Arising from the untrodden forest floor,—
Dreams that like steely daggers glisten deep
Behind the human eyelids closed in sleep.

"Prelude" sings itself into the memory:

I

I have gone seeking beauty
Across the earth's wide face,
But I have never found it
For long in any place.

Now I come singing, lyrics
To silence my despair,
That beauty's so illusive
And so unearthly fair.

II

Hills are all aflower,
Skies are all afire,—
Fool was I to sorrow
For a dead desire.

Lo, the April marvel
Stirs the earth again:
Break, my heart, of beauty,
That would not break of pain!

Richard Aldington and his wife, Hilda Doolittle (known as "H.D.") are accredited as being leaders in what is called the imagists movement. William Rose Benet says of Mr. Aldington:

> "Partly tough-minded modern, partly renaissance dreamer, Richard Aldington is both among the best poets of his time, and yet—somehow—more remote . . . the accent of his verse is that of the born artist, and will always delight lovers of the beauty of the world."

Edwin Markham comments in his *Book Of Poetry* that he finds Aldington at his best in his two volumes *Images Old and New*, and *War and Love*, and at his best, Mr. Markham states, Aldington reaches a high level. We find proof of this statement in the twentieth poem, the last in his new book, *Life Quest* (Doubleday, Doran & Co.). We give it in its entirety:

But men and women
Before it is too late
Will you not draw back from greed and destruction

Ere the earth becomes a cruel desert
And the sea a sterile pollution
And the sun black with anger against you ?

You are building up the world with prisons
For yourselves and your children,
You are rotten with death-worship.

I think you are dying,
All the more do I think it
Because you breed pallid millions
And try to drill them into health.

Nothing that is worth being
Can be learned by drill,
Nothing that is worth giving
Can be bullied into another.

But there is deep and delicate life
If only you can seek in patience
For the moment, and let it come to you
From Sun, Earth and Sea.

When I think of the world of men and women
The world as it is
I bow my head in my arms
And lament destruction and greed.

But in myself I feel exquisitely alive,
Life flows through me,
In a touch beyond prayer I ask
That my life quest go on till I die,
Oh, let the Sun still be mine
And the undying Sea
And the Holy Earth !

Aldington writes me the following interesting paragraphs on the writing of Poetry :

> " The nearest I can come to an account of how in my own case poetry comes to be written is to say that it seems to be the almost spontaneous result of a special and unpredictable state of mind and body. I say ' almost spontaneous ' because it seems necessary that one should have a general wish to write down what comes and also for the obvious reason that one can always resist the impulse. But it is not possible for me to say : ' I must go and write a poem ' and do it, as I write a piece of prose when I say : ' I must go and write an article.' Indeed I feel sure I

should write much below par if I forced myself to write a novel or a story as a task, instead of in obedience to an impulse. The difference would seem to be this: Some forms of writing can be undertaken entirely by the conscious mind, the intellect; others, which we vaguely call 'creative,' seem to require the collaboration of unconscious or partly conscious psychological processes which can hardly be made intelligible to those who do not experience them.

"To me at any rate poetry is the most spontaneous, the most impulsive form of writing. But while the theme and expression have this particular quality, there is need for long and careful preparation in trying to keep oneself sensitive, and also need for much after-work in rejection and re-writing. Prose, when it comes happily, may go for page after page with scarcely an alteration, but every page of poetry must be written over many times. Poetry in this age, and indeed in many others, is the most disinterested form of the art of writing. The audience is nearly always a small one, so that the financial rewards are slight. (The least successful of my prose books has earned me as much as twenty years of writing poetry.) Moreover, contemporary reputations often owe more than a little to proficiency in the arts of literary intrigue. For these and other reasons only he who writes poetry with no other motive than the happiness felt in composition can preserve himself from disappointment. Over my first manuscript volume of poems, long since destroyed, I put a line from Spenser: 'I play to please myself, albeit ill.' It is still my motto."

In *Brief Procession* by Anne Lloyd (G. P. Putnam Sons, New York) is to be found gracious expression and the poet's sensibility. This is Mrs. Lloyd's second book of poems, *Antiques and Amber* being her first. She writes me that she is "interested in the old Indian, Chinese and Egyptian rhythms—'the drum-beats of thousands of years ago'—surely an art that has such deep roots in the past should be loved and studied."

Musical are these verses. "The Marble Cup" is a good illustration:

I saw the marble cup of dawn
Spill amber wine upon the air;
The revellers of the night were gone—
No star was there.

Invisible hands the chalice tipped
For me to drink—I raised my head,
And one small drop of morning sipped,
And I was fed.

In another vein we read "Washington's Tomb at Mt. Vernon":

Lilacs were scenting all the April air
As we drew near on slow and reverent feet;
And hidden mocking-birds made music there
Melodiously, from some high retreat.
A gentle calm seemed brooding everywhere—
Calm from a heart that long had ceased to beat.

And a great peace enfolded us, as light
As gossamer, perennial as spring,
Yet sturdy as traditions burnished bright
By the long line of pilgrims journeying
To that still place, where lilacs, tall and white,
Guarded a leader dearer than a king.

All who have visited this tomb will remember a kind of suspended reverence and beauty here.

We find in the first poem of *Lower than the Angels*, by Rosalie Dunlap Hickler (Willett, Clark & Co.), a tribute to the spirit of laughter which is deftly expressed: "To My Friend":

The wine of life is tears, but the cup is laughter.
Sands of laughter circle the bitter sea.
In days to come, and the years that follow after
Many will weep, but who will laugh with me?

When you walk apart in perilous places
Cover your breast with laughter to the end.
Deeper than tears and stronger than embraces
Shall be the jest with which friend honours friend.

When your mirth re-echoes from roof and rafter
Think of the goblet, think of the gleaming sand,
For the wine is tears, but the golden cup is laughter—
Beautiful Grail we passed from hand to hand.

"January Thaw" is well done, ending with a comment of the author's conviction on death in the last verse:

There was rain in the night, a dull delivering rain
That washed the air of sparkle and hard blue gleam,
And bent the frozen grasses in the meadow,
And loosed the stream.

Now is talk and laughter of running water,
Light imperious talk of water freed.
Indolent winds stray through the winter meadow,
Winter indeed.

Everyone knows that death is a season only.
Though laughter is hushed again and tempests shout
It is not long till fire runs in the maples,
And ice goes out.

Mrs. Hickler is a native of Michigan, where she attended the University and also the University of Chicago. Her home is now near Boston, and many of her poems have appeared in such outstanding publications as *The Atlantic Monthly*. She has won numerous prizes awarded by the New England and Massachusetts Poetry Societies and recently won a nation-wide Peace Poem Contest.

A charming love lyric is " Morning Prayer " :

I rest in perfect thankfulness, and rise at dawn to pray.
O Joy that Wakes before the Light, it is your name I say,
Your shining name the shadows fear more than the sword of day.

The barren tree beside my door is red with clustered fruit,
O Water After so long Drouth, can thirsty lips be mute ?
The sullen vine of grudging bloom has rotted at the root.

A running flame licks up the mist that hides the road to you.
My naked feet shall take it soon, O Heart of Sun and Dew.
I only sleep that I may wake and speak your name anew.

" Wait " follows :

All very well while ice is thick
And snow lies white around.
Wait till a crocus, lancet quick,
Pierces the frozen ground.
Wait till the pussy-willows swell,
And dusty pigeons mate,
And life aches hard in its heavy shell—
Wait for a season, *wait* !

Mrs. Hickler writes the following frank statement :

> " As one of my friends remarked, I don't know anything about poetry, I only write it, and my life is so occupied with things mundane that it is very much a by-product. I would rather write, though, than anything else in the world, and I can't help it even in the middle of tumult of manual labor. . . . For the rest, I believe that Eleanor Wylie is safe among the immortals, and that T. S. Eliot will be forgotten in another generation except as an ' influence.' Nobody will read him. That is only my personal conviction, of course."

It is difficult to refrain from giving more quotations from this delightful book of song.

A new and talented voice is heard from Texas in the sonnet sequence *Tower to the East*, by Jan Fortune (Southwest Press, Dallas, Texas).

Jan Fortune writes us :

> " The sonnets in this sequence were all written singly, or at least in groups of two or three and over a period of about five years. I had no idea of a sequence or a story. But when we

started putting them together for publication we discovered that they fitted, one into the other, in a natural story sequence. . . . Poetry is elemental. It must touch a responsive chord in the heart of the reader or it isn't poetry. No matter how finely worded, how perfect as to construction and syntax, if that kinship with the emotions of all the world is lacking, then it isn't poetry. I write poetry because I cannot help it, and there are long periods when I can't write a line, so I don't even try. Then something comes to me—an ecstasy—a tragedy—an emotion of some sort and I am able to write, perhaps a dozen poems. . . . Poetry has always occupied an important place in the lives of men, as exemplified by the sagas, depicting the legends of a race; by the lyric utterances of the Bible; by the troubadours. It is more important to-day, perhaps, than ever before, because it is universally written and read—and heavens, what atrocities are often committed in its name! The poets whose work I like most are: Rupert Brooke, Alfred Noyes, Tennyson, Laurence Hope, and I believe Nancy Byrd Turner."

There is a touch of mystery in this sequence of twenty-four sonnets in the Shakespearean form. The first follows:

You leaned against the doorway and you said:
"The lake is blue-black, thunderously still;
There is no wind upon our little hill—
Even the reeds along the shore seem dead,
But it will storm—I feel it!"
Through the gloom
I saw your figure, dim against the night;
And then the lake was splattered with white light
That danced and shimmered through our quiet room.

Like some small child who trembles at the thunder
I fled to you, and your arms sheltered me;
The wild winds made the lake a raging sea—
The lightnings crackled—ripped the skies asunder;
But fear went from me, though no word was said
Save your heart speaking underneath my head.

This sequence is the story of love, of its joy and its sorrow, its richness and poverty. We give the eighteenth, which carries the misery of doubt:

Now you've set walls against me—shut me out;
Then was I ever loved or welcome there?
Have I but dreamed it? Did you never care?
With this cold wall you've raised a haunting doubt;
Have I walked, believing, through the years now past,
Too blind to see I saw that which was not?
Remembering words and gestures you've forgot?
Shielding our altar flame from skreeling blast?

I built this high white tower, there to set
This radiance of love I burned for you,
So that a wondering world might pause and view
A miracle they never could forget . . .
(If I had thought you had but words to give,
And nothing more, I had not cared to live.)

The last sonnet in this sequence is given over to a contemplation of death :

There is a strange and acrid road which leads
To where Death sits with poppies in her hair ;
The slow sun sifts upon her shoulders bare ;
There is no movement in the silent reeds.
Long is the road that men must travel over
To feel Death's fingers cool against their faces ;
Yet still they come from strange and far-off places,
And take the reeded path to be her lover.

Serene she waits beside the dark green river
Unshaken and unmoved, secure in knowing
That certain as the sullen river's flowing,
We come to her forever and forever,
Seeking the silence of that fabled rest
Which lies within her cool and poppied breast.

The hundred odd poems in Mildred Whitney Stillman's fourth book of verse, *Apology To My Neighbours* (Frederick A. Stokes Co.), brings the sense to the reader of the happy life of the writer. In the brief note on the jacket we read : " Mrs. Stillman was born in San Francisco, educated in Boston, and lives in New York City and Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, with some weeks every summer at Northeast Harbour, Maine, where she likes best to write. She is the wife of a doctor and the mother of six children."

The following poem, " Discovery," is an illustration of the happiness that pervades many of these poems :

Here where beech buds have out-grown
Winter wrappings, and the moss
Brightened by the winter snow
Drips on every shady stone,
I am sure of what I know,
I have come into my own.

Standing on my windy hill,
Where the flicker streaks across,
I am friends with my own will.
Here, although I stand alone,
I have come into my own.

We give the first of a sonnet sequence entitled "For One Unnamed":

Working with you is working in the sun
On open land, when in the April air
Bushes and stones are clarified, each one
Burnished with meaning. I who lingered where
White birds sweep inward from a morning sea
To pillage blueberries on windy downs,
I who had thought my happiness must be
Release from the grim ugliness of towns,
Who loved to climb a spruce beleaguered hill
While the blue ocean slowly scaled the sky,
Where far, dim islands gather sea-fog still,
Now find no street too strait, no wall too high.
A narrow room, dim, curtainless and bare
Has light and distance, if I find you there.

Many of these graceful verses suggest their eligibility for musical setting. Charming is "Quicksilver":

You can be anything for half an hour.
With a chameleon facility,
Turning to orange on an orange flower,
You take the colour of your company,
Dancing too perfectly to every tune.
Quicksilver, you might easily be friends
With strolling angels in the afternoon,
And Dionysus when the evening ends.
Have you no constancy? I can not tell.
Though I pile mole hills to an Ararat,
I only find I love you far too well
For my own peace, and don't blame you for that.
O, I'm not blaming you for anything.
I might as well blame April for the spring.

In the midst of solemn and sorrowful expressions, it is good to meet with a book overflowing with the joy of living. Such a book is Mrs. Stillman's.

A quotation of Sydney Smith's comes into the mind while reading this volume:

> "The haunts of happiness are varied and rather unaccountable, but I have more often seen her among little children, and home firesides, and in country houses, than anywhere else—at least, I think so."

Mrs. Stillman says, in reference to the writing of poetry:

> "I have always written it because I could not help it. I began to write, or rather to dictate to my mother, when I was four years old. Do you not think that there is a tendency to set

poetry too much apart from life, just as there is a tendency to make religion a thing in itself away from life? Writing verse is my favorite means of expression and communication. The important thing is to have something to express. I have long cherished a line which I once saw on the cover of THE POETRY REVIEW: 'Poetry is all relationship in love'."

When a poet ventures forth with his first book and is received cordially, nay more, finds that his poems are to be published by The Macmillan Company, truly his cup runneth over with gladness. We congratulate C. F. MacIntyre on his good fortune. He experiments here with modern technique and uses disintegrated stanza forms, irregular and varied rhythms, dissonance and suspended rhyme. From the wide choice of subjects in this collection of *Poems* we have chosen "The Increasing Friend":

> Thus far she knew of death but what all know:
> death is a silence, a hypodermic to pain,
> the inventory of love, spring-board to peace;
> death orders marble hewn, earth spaded; death
> is the vacuum hungry for the last thin breath,
> a prize to be won by paying the too-dear price,
> a posted road down which all feet must go.
>
> Thus far she knew of death but what all know.
>
> But each time that he came she battened and learned
> a newer lesson to stuff in her emptying heart,
> and her breast became as a field too diligently turned
> by the plow of time, thick-seeded for harvests of hurt.
> Yet, whenever she gazed in his face, she knew him better,
> until he seemed an acquaintance, even a friend
> when they pledged each other.
> Altho the cup was bitter,
> she got a taste for dregs as she lagged to the end.

The young American poets to-day seem very much concerned with the short-comings of their country. Entertaining we find "Bright American Youth," which begins with:

> What you are looking for is not in the books.
> Your teachers, pompous androgynes, gentle gossips,
> erect mirages of pleonastic blocks,
> while the business interests multiply the warships.
>
> You get quaint roughage: Patagonian myths,
> the allegories of Spenser, the splitting of atoms,
> designs for linoleum, the mating of moths,
> and a muck from Marx thru Smith to the proto-Adam.

and ends with:

> Best be off to the woods, dream in the grass,
> make love, or frisk the frail-crotched hopes of the birds;
> but leave your replicas propped at the head of the class
> with a dictaphone to preserve the winged words.

Mr. MacIntyre, in an interesting letter from his University of California, at Los Angeles, tells us:

> "As a professor of commas and clauses, I keep too busy to engage in any outside activities, aside from my writing." . . .

He makes the interesting prophecy that America may have a proper Renaissance—within two hundred years—in the following paragraph:

> "No one writes as he pleases. On the contrary, his writing is regimented and determined by his particular glandular set-up and by the environmental influences which constitute his fortune, good or bad. Everyone collects in his memory something from the raw, fermenting mash of life. If he happens to care to write it down, the process is distillation, and the resultant which has run through the disciplining alembic of conscious craftsmanship is a thing stronger, clearer, and more pure than life itself. I do not believe in inspired poets with messages; but I believe that the large number of earnest and talented people now engaged in writing verse in America is a sign that the country may have a proper Renaissance . . . within two hundred years."

It will be remembered that the Yale University Press presents The Yale Series of Younger Poets, edited by Stephen Vincent Benet. First volumes of Hervey Allen, Frances Frost, Paul Engle, Thomas Hornsby Ferril, Muriel Rukeyser, etc., have been published by this distinguished press. The first book of Edward Weismiller's (*The Deer Comes Down*) comes to us with the following favourable comment from Benet:

> "For, if Mr. Weismiller is sensitive he is also youthfully accurate. There is the raking claw and the sharp tooth as well as the speed of flight and stretched wing. . . . There is enough salt in it to keep it sweet. . . . The writer is intent, not on making a large noise but in putting down just what he has seen."

Edward Weismiller was born in Wisconsin and is now a Junior in Cornell College, Iowa. It was his years on a Vermont farm near Brattleboro that colour this volume. There is a powerful persuasion in the State of Vermont which appears to grip the poets and stir them to celebrate the beauty, material and spiritual, found within its borders. Or, shall we not more correctly say, the material beauty evokes a spiritual activity. Here spring rains, woodlands, thickets, hemlocks, hawks, field mice, birds and crows and frogs, are pressed into this service of beauty and the spirit. Several of the shorter poems follow. "Eclipse" is the first one we give:

Burnt out and hollowed with cloud, the cold moon rides
Petal-thin, husk-thin in the frosty sky;
The sharp air rings like steel at its wintry sides
While the high

Crafty wind draws shadow upon its light
As if it were ghost, to be hounded down the air
But surely, through the wind, through the iron night
It is there:

It is flesh, having known earth mistress; and the love-
Red shadow has stained its rim and worn at its tines.
Now it is old, and dead, cloud-hollowed above.
But it shines.

"Plan For a City" is next:

Now will the fragile spring come down
Upon this hill, upon this town,
And sun bring hesitant leaves to bear
Its intricate shadow in the air;

Now will the birds enforce their sweet
Articulate joy above the street—
Where lie stained fragments of a plan
The winds swung down too close to man.

"Thicket," which follows, carries with it the mystery and fascination of the woods:

You who have heard the thrush, and seen the partridge
Gliding smoothly under a grey-white sky:
The sweetest song has never come from the forest,
Nor the softest wing gone by.

You who have reached the hemlock woods, and beeches,
And seen the fallen tree and the black slate ledge:
There is more darkness still within the thicket
Than ever came to the edge.

From the closing group in the volume, which gives the title to the book, we give the first, a beautiful and brimming expression:

Softly, by night, the deer come down to drink
At the secret pools, a the curve of the hidden streams;
Their eyes no longer bright with easy dreams
The deer come to strange water. There at the brink
They lean out of the thickets: not as they stood
In safer times; their cool immaculate mouths
Move in the shallows, quenching their long day-drouths
Swiftly before they leap for the comfortless wood.

They are an exiled people, running the trails
From their green whispering towns. Even by day
You will hear their footfalls softer and farther away
In the forests ; while the cold, bright northern sun
Leaps in their fearful eyes, and their breathing fails,
And the wind beats in at their ears : you are lost, you are done.

Mr. Weismiller sends us an account of his personal experience in the writing of poetry :

> " Each of us, of course, writes what he must, about the things he knows best. It has seemed to me that in these latter days people have been too busy crying havoc over the ruins of their own civilization to realize that there ever was another world, and that if it too is lost, this is as much their fault as is the unsatisfactory condition of the more decadent world in which they live. We cannot, perhaps, make our own world, but we can destroy the one which was made for us, and if we do not even attempt to build upon the ruins, of course we must live bitter and despairing, as so many of our younger poets of to-day are finding out.
>
> " But I do not like the mood of despair. Granted that the evils of our world must be brought to light, even if they are terrible enough to obscure the light ; nevertheless I fail to see why we must stop there. In my own writing I have left the uncovering the sickness in the ' world I never made ' to others more capable of describing it than I ; my poetry is largely in affirmation of the world all peoples destroyed when they became ' civilized.'
>
> " And yet that sounds too pretentious ; much of my verse is purely descriptive, and exists for the description. But I have tried to show the world of nature as I have seen it, without idealization or sentimentality. It is not all beautiful or kind or good, but it has definite values, at least to me, and the first step toward any rebuilding is inventory of materials at hand. It may be too late to rebuild ; it may be too that man is in any case too selfish to even attempt to restore a civilization which basically has been alien, even inimical, to his own. But I, for one, feel that we have done a great wrong in destroying what we had no right to destroy ; in effect what the ' coarse old men,' the pioneers, did was remove all possible check or gauge upon their own activities, and commit themselves and their descendents to an unalterable way of life which was not necessarily the only right way. I think we need that gauge ; I should like to see the deer come down again. Therefore I think that the writing of nature poetry is not so much beside the point as it may seem to many people."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

LOCAL SPANISH FRONT

FRET, fret
why fret these veins
like traffic-laden arteries
in a wild town ?

Pulse, pulse
why pulse up-down
heart that used to lie quietly
under the clothes ?

Feet, feet
why feet disclose
nettles, couch-grass and wild
bind-weed
in this to-do ?

Not sensibly like dancers' toes
but angleish and askew,
like circus-clown
like a wild tramp
thats lost his coin
and stamps and beats
briars and nettle-bed
in panic rage.

Fever,
yes, here's image
of bloody pain and retching
sighs
burnt on a land

Yes, yes
distress that's fanned
by each amazed and saddened
breeze
that shakes the dark.

Hush, hush
please hush fool heart !
but granite truth within denies
all thought of peace.

We know farewell. Here old
ways part,
old hope's a fool, old ease
drops from the hand ;
there cannot be
as yesterday ;
the future's pushed
as yoke in egg
into cleft Spain.

" Spain ! Spain ! "
again shout " Spain ! "
this grandest note that history's
crashed on the world.

Gush gush,
blood-rush and hurl
break-down of sodden barriers
across earth's face

Up ! on !
upon us they place
their open brilliant voices
" Think ! help ! decide ! "

When was an hour, when such a
place
for brothers ? when has pride
such flags unfurled
for messages ?
when could traitors
who abandon
comrades, throw ages
back into night ?

Up arms !
alarms to fight,
out all the little ostrich-eyes
that peer for crumbs !

No time
to mime deaf, dumb,
stutter no more hypocrisies
embrace cold need ;

For us
sharp thrust ; the deed
thought, wrench and the bold
sacrifice
that upholds hope.

Our brothers mount the barricades
our golden sisters rope
themselves to guns
then droop their curls
in sweet-hearts' blood;
the morning flush
is pale on Spanish hills
and plains to-day
the dew's away
at blink of dawn,
but there are tears enough,
enough rich blood,
to wet the soil
and skins drum-drawn
with raking toil
break in fierce sweat that floods
astonished cells.

This miracle of a new Spain
leaping as warrior
full into life,
as from that brain
with a great shout
wisdom and war,
Pallas, full-armed leapt out
to win the day.

MADELEINE LEE.

THE HOSTILE SILENCE

NOW silence falls, deliberate and grim—
A water-course by drought is sealed,
And on its brim
The flowers of courtesy grow faded, dim.

The silence deepens, hostile, ominous;
Your eyes side-glance and mine look down.
I, timorous,
See green slimed pools and rocks dividing us.

The silence breaks, a ripple of glad sound,
Soft music of inflowing tide,
Rain on parched ground,
The flowers of courtesy once more abound.

ELSA BRABANT PARKER.

A portrait of John Milton at the age of twenty, was sold at Sotheby's on February 24th. This telling work, on a panel 29 in. by 24 in. is probably by the brush of the Dutch-descended painter, Cornelius Janssens (1593–1662). He took the English name of Jonson, and was a favourite Court painter of James I and Charles I until Vandyck ousted him. It is known that Jonson painted Milton as a boy of ten. Indeed, this work is famous, as it eventually belonged to Thomas Hollis, the eighteenth-century "republican," and then passed to the well-known Victorian, J. Passmore Edwards, from whose collection it joined the Pierpont Morgan Gallery in New York. The portrait just sold is dated 1627, with the initials of the painter, "C.I.," "fecit," and the inscription: "J. Milton, an : aet. suae 20." It shows the poet in tufted black doublet slashed with white and a full ruff, edged with lace. Milton would then be at Christ's College, Cambridge, where, despite his manly appearance, his fellows dubbed him "The Lady."

A PHILOSOPHICAL VERSE NOVEL

" Thomas, this earth
Always laughs at us humans. She has different kinds of laughter. I myself
Have heard two different kinds of laughter out of the ground "

Laughter out of the Ground by Robin Lampson (Charles Scribner's Sons, $2.50) is an epic poem, a novel (as Mr. Lampson himself says) and a piece of American spiritual history all in one. It is intensely American in the sense in which those words can be spoken of Walt Whitman, and all who love and admire Walt Whitman will appreciate this poem. To quote Mr. Lampson again, the book is written in "free hexameters—lines having six wave-tops each," and that produces the effect of an irregular wave-like motion.

Within the solid narrative substance of this novel in verse are embedded lyrical passages. In these is contained the very definite philosophy of the author, and they are, of course, written in a more intense fashion, and by this greater intensity forged into a more closely knit poetic form.

" Men live in mankind, forgetting that only the earth, and life,
Are important ; that only life and the source of life—the earth and the sunlight,
Have meaning " . . .

The poem begins with love and marriage and the birth of a son to the hero, followed by tragedy, continues with the various and thrilling adventures he experiences on the Californian goldfields, his friendships and enmities, and his part in the colonization of Western America, and ends with a second and happier marriage of love. Thus, in spite of the modern candour of some of its pages, the praises of marriage and love are to the fore.

The construction is finely proportioned and carefully worked out to form an artistic whole, and the hero, Samuel Gibson, the New Hampshire farmer's son, is a genuine man, vigorous and complex in his variety of virtues and failings, although simple in another sense.

" Men who lift up their eyes to the hills for something other than gold.
For the superhuman strength, and re-creative beauty and the music of the mountains
And in realization of the true relation of the human animal to the earth."

Again, from one of the lyrics :

"And let me not dream, but remember that dreamers have wrecked the world
The practical dreamers—emperors and kings dictators and presidents
Statesmen and politicians. . . .
O let me not dream, but consider instead the destruction tolerated
By dreamers, by those other, impractical dreamers who perceived reality

But, weaklings in faith, avoided the struggle, evaded the battle
By making a pact with illusion, a personal peace with existence."

And again :

"'Dear Mary',
He whispered, 'all the years before this were just time out of living.
By the worst
And best luck I've found the loveliest woman that ever the sunlight
Drew from the earth !'"

Is this a philosophy drawn straight from the earth and inspired by pure instinct, or is it not rather a philosophy which has considered and passed over the metaphysics of the Ages, and gone some way to reject Intellect as an illusion ? One thinks of D. H. Lawrence. If this is so, then this is not so much an elementary pagan faith as the most recent product of human meditation, although perhaps in part unconsciously so. The originality lies in the linking of this "earth-philosophy" with true sons of the earth rather than with the sophisticated who have left the town to "escape."

Can such a philosophical epic be a novel, and, if so, can such a novel be a true epic poem ? I think that those who read this poem will probably be inclined to answer both these questions in the affirmative.

There may be some who will rigidly uphold the classical dignity of the older epic, but surely the stoutest of these must admit that the Classic Epic in heroic style can hardly be a product of our Age. We must, with Mr. Lampson, consent, in such a work, to a less strict versification, and we must, as even in the Classical Epics, consent, in the main body of the work, to a lowering of the musical intensity expected of a lyric.

Robin Lampson, who was born 1900 in Mokelumne Hill, Calaveras County, was sent to Russia by the Quakers as a famine relief worker in 1922 ; returned to California, received his A.B. from University of California, 1932, with honours and Phi Beta Kappa membership. He is Western editor of *The American Poetry Journal*, New York, and a contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW. *Laughter Out of the Ground* was accepted for publication by Charles Scribner's Sons just one day after they received part of the manuscript—only four days after the author had sent it to them by air express. To have one's first novel—a novel in verse, at that—accepted before it was finished, accepted by a leading American publisher ; to receive a cash advance for a book of poetry ; to have another leading New York publisher bidding for the book—all this sounds more like fiction than fact, like an author's day-dream. Yet this is exactly what happened to Robin Lampson.

A.J.G.R.

The Academy of American Poets, formed two years ago to subsidize "poets of proved merit," announces that Edwin Markham, eighty-four years old author of *The Man with the Hoe*, has been chosen by the academy for a special prefatory award of $5,000.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

THE fundamental emotions of life, unchanging in themselves, yet served up to each new generation in a new decanter, take some time to settle down after the shaking of each successive pouring ; but the disturbed wines of these emotions reach again a quiet maturity within the brains of such men as D. G. James. The emotions which make poetry emanate almost entirely from the poetic imagination which, consequently, is the subject of Mr. James' erudite work *Scepticism and Poetry* (Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.) in which he discusses the higher cynicism of certain of the great poets of the English tradition in the light—or twilight rather—of modern reason. This most important book is a masterly reply to the doctrines of Mr. I. A. Richards and those psychologists who abide by his theory of " the emotional and volitional response to poetry."

In this book we feel that deep is calling to deep and that we have got a cross-line on to their conversation and are eavesdropping. A sense of decency almost compels us to hang up the receiver and go away. We would be wise, however, to listen to Mr. James.

The doubts which every lover of poetry must occasionally feel as to the " vitalness " of the poets are here clearly and logically dispelled, if only to gather again on a more distant and at the moment invisible horizon. Mr. James' logic moves to a somewhat cheerless end, the prediction of the ultimate failure of poetry. His excellent chapter on " Visionary Dreariness " prepares the way with great skill for this conclusion, which nevertheless seems rather overstressed. The failure of poetry is no greater than the failure of all other human fabrications to satisfy completely. Whether we agree with his argument or not, he sums it up consummately thus : " The movement of the poetic mind is towards a powerful sense of the world's limits ; but it is compelled by an inward necessity to try to penetrate beyond those limits, and therefore to involve itself in inevitable defeat."

While there is nothing reactionary in the book, which is a straightforward march from the lines of Coleridge's *Biographia Literara*, a present-day tendency to incoherent ecstasy in poetry is kept firmly in check. " It is nonsense," remarks Mr. James, " to think that a flight from reason is necessarily an advance towards a more powerful imaginative life. The discipline of the intellectual life is an altogether saving factor in any culture worthy of its name."

Now to taste the old wine fresh decanted.

The poetry of Clifford Dyment, which has now achieved a second volume *Straight or Curly ?* (Dent, 2s. 6d.), has the great virtue of coherence. It also has enough other virtues to stand out from the work of most of our latter-day poets as something which will create a durable impression upon the mind of the reader. If I were awarding stars to poetry as press critics do to films, Dyment's new book should have a constellation to itself. The poems are modern in style and theme ; yet they do not contradict tradition, rather they proceed from it.

The nonsense that frequently is talked about the obscurity of modern poetry has concealed the general truth that the great bulk of modern poetry—there are, of course, notable exceptions—relies on a more or less limpid simplicity for its chief attraction. The complexities of the advanced thought of even the so-called obscure poets are couched in simple language. There is certainly an obscurity-for-obscurity's-sake school; but it has no real significance, and Clifford Dyment for one is not a follower of it, as this fragment from "The Comforter of Men" will show:

"Dwell in my heart, and I shall love
The man who makes the living dead;
Dwell in my flesh, and I shall know
The agony of being God."

While this, from "Voyage," shows him a very real poet, clear, not often extravagant, yet always vivid:

"Oh, for strange countries! But they are leagues away,
Locked, like a song behind shut lips."

Elizabeth Belloc's *Poems* (Macmillan, 1s.) reach a satisfying perfection in their own remote way. Although they are preoccupied with themes far removed from the town-dweller of the twentieth century, their undercurrent of vitality and Miss Belloc's appreciation for the *mot juste* make the poems touch a chord in even this self-sufficient creature; with,

"A song with a sound of weeping
Of the sunburnt reapers reaping
On the great plain of the Danube—
The song of the Sword of Stephen
And the crown that waits for a king."

Her poems on Greek themes have a classic stateliness, but her work reaches its greatest intensity in the sacred poems, of which I think "Agnosticism" the best:

"These hold the holy-winding-sheet of Christ:
The still straight body and the noble head
They bind about with linen bands to lie
With myrrh and aloes on a stony bed.

These are the mourners at the burial,
They know the stopped heart, the departed breath;
The hands that tend His body in the tomb,
The hearts that hold Him in the sleep of death."

In *Chota Chants* (Fraser, Edwards, 5s.), a book of Scots verse by William Hutchenson, there is another devotional poem, "Late Work," of some beauty:

"The last man goes, the chambers close;
St. Mary's ancient bells

Chime that old hymn the martyrs chose
That hope eternal tells.

What mystery here when all go home
And hucksterers depart?
Another realm comes in the gloom
And brings another heart.

Soft footsteps creak from post to post,
And whispers truly tell
Here treads at night an angel host,
Michael and Gabriel."

The obvious rhythms of set verse forms, such as those in which this last volume is written, have received the attention of generations of able prosodists, and a more progressive study in Elsie Fogerty's chapter on "Rhythm in Poetry" in *Rhythm* (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.) would have been welcomed. The less analysed subjects of "sprung" rhythm and subtle rhythmic schemes, which transmute the truncated prose of free verse into something that can without hesitation be called poetry, present a wide field for research, but have been altogether ignored in this comprehensive compilation which goes to great length to prove the well-proven fact that, in the words of the now popular song, "rhythm makes the world go round."

This book of platitudes provides an excellent elementary approach to a real understanding of rhythm, and I, who had expected rather more than this from its high-sounding introduction, found my disappointment mitigated by Miss Fogerty's appreciation of the poetic drama and choric speaking revival which, as she writes, "with its rather dangerous possibilities, is giving us back the possibility of understanding what the Greek drama and Japanese 'Noh' plays meant in the days of their religious significance. There is in this a great force of harmony and rhythmic beauty which the nation cannot afford to neglect. We may achieve again a theatre which will reflect our modern life as the Elizabethan Age reflected the sixteenth century, and as Yeats and Synge re-inspired the national song of Ireland for a few brief years at the Abbey Theatre. If this is achieved the rhythmic teaching of verse must become part of our earliest education."

The wine is still here; but we want new bottles for it.

JOHN H. ELLIOT.

WEST IS WEST

It is well named, this new volume of verse from Stephen Vincent Benét, *Burning City* (Heinemann, 5s.), for there is a note of denunciation underlying many of the poems, and in the "Metropolitan Nightmares," which are trenchant with the impossible possibilities of a revolt of the machines and the arrival of the steel-eating termites, the cities themselves are doomed. There are greatly moving poems as well, such as "The Lost Wife," and whimsical ones like "Sparrow," and a magnificent ode to Walt Whitman written in a style so complementary that Whitman's voice is used antiphonally, as it were. To the Master's question: "Is it well with these States?" and "My tan-faced children?" part of the reply is:

The cities are great, portentous, a world-marvel,
The bridges arched like the necks of beautiful horses.
We had made the dry land bloom and the dead land blossom. . . .

The old wound of your war is healed and we are one nation.
We have linked the whole land with the steel and the hard highways.
We have fought new wars and won them. . . .

We have made many, fine new toys.
We——
There is a rust on the land. . . .
There is shadow in the bright sun, there is shadow upon the streets.
They burn the grain in the furnace while men go hungry.
They pile the cloth of the looms while men go ragged.
We walk naked in our plenty. . . .

We tore the buffalo's pasture with the steel blade.
We made the waste land blossom and it has blossomed.
That was our fate; now that land takes its own revenge,
And the giant dust-flower blooms over five States. . . .

And there are many years in the dust of America.
And they are not ended yet. . . .

And always the water flowing, earthy, majestic,
Fed with snow and heat, dew and moonlight,
Always the wide, sure water,
Over the rotted deer-horn
The gold, Spanish money,
The long-rusted iron of many undertakings,
Over De Soto's bones and Joliet's wonder,
And the long forest-years before them, the brief years after,
The broad flood, the eternal motion, the restless-hearted
Always, for ever, Mississippi, the god.

The other Benét, William Rose, has sponsored an anthology, *Columbia Poetry* 1936 (Columbia U.P. and O.U.P., 5s.). This University maintains its unusually high level of excellence in its poetry. "Now the Wain" is by Boris Todrin, important as a contributor, having won the University's prize:

Now the Wain, seven-starred,
  Burns without a torch's sound:
And from earth's coned shadow spill
  Flood and fire on the ground.

And beyond the corralled hills
  Thaws with bullock-thunder crack—
Crashing widely through the states
  On the burly waters' back.

Now the cattle of the sky
  Move in drifting herds of light:
To the evening pools of shade—
  To the pastures of the night.

A different kind of collection is one from Yale, an *Anthology of Verse*, 1836–1936 *From the Yale Literary Magazine*, (Yale U.P. $2.50), and it is remarkable for the absence of ultra-modernism in its later years. There is an unmistakable change in diction and tone, the post-war writers growing freer in form but straiter in concision, and more sincere in their rarer emotion.

It is a far cry from the West to the East, from the vigorous colloquialisms of America to the flowery phrases of India. P. R. Kaikini, whose *Songs of a Wanderer* come from Bombay (New Book Co. Re 1–8) has deepened the significance of his prose poetry since his last book, and his command of English has strengthened; but it is difficult for a westerner to appreciate oriental mysticism and emotion in the English language, which is really a tool for rougher purposes.

There are eastern subjects treated in *Wings Against Dawn* (Silhouettes Press, Ontario) a beautifully produced posthumous volume collecting the poems of Arthur Truman Merrill, sometime contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW and *Poetry of Today*, but they are approached with a western mind. Indeed, the subjects are as cosmopolitan as the inhabitants of America, and one is struck by the versatility of this excellent poet and his width of vision. "Vivekananda" was a Hindu pragmatist:

On a garden wall above the lawn
A peacock out-vanitied the dawn.

Vivekananda, lost in thought,
Looked upon the heavens wrought
In morning gold, wherein he sought
A revelation. Night had yielded nought,

And now the long gold trail
Of dawn-light and the refringent tail
Of the bird impale
All his philosophy could avail.

Vivekananda, lifted high above the realm of thought,
Walked in his garden where he taught.

Where one has a variety of themes, another may have a single theme and a great versatility of mood. Leonard Feeney, S.J., in *Song for a Listener* (Macmillan, 6s.) is almost wholly concerned with the mysteries of religion and how he slowly became aware of them, but his clever sequence of triple triplets is astonishingly full of satire, humour, and faith; sometimes the term of "holy frivolity" seems the only description of it, and he can pass from one mood to the other in the same breath. No. 20 makes perhaps the strongest appeal:

I grew, if I may boast a bit,
Familiar with the Infinite,
And everywhere looked round for It;

But never thought to find It small,
And stumble on It in a stall,
So simple to approach and all;

So kindred, kissable and such,
In measurements that were not much,
With little hands and feet to touch.

The verse of "Spoundel" comes in for his censure.

EVELYN D. BANGAY.

G. K. CHESTERTON, E. A. POE, RUDYARD KIPLING.

We expect that before now all our readers will have read with great delight the characteristic *Autobiography* by G. K. Chesterton (Hutchinson, 10s. 6d.). Many will cherish personal recollections of our former President and two old and faithful Kensington members, his father and mother, with whom he deals lovingly at the beginning of this fascinating record of a robust enjoyment of the glorious gift of the senses and the sensational experience of sensation, the narrative of a sensitive man who admitted that "I had in childhood and have partly preserved out of childhood a certain romance of receptiveness which has not been killed by sin or even by sorrow. A man does not grow old without being bothered, but I have grown old without being bored." As he says in his final chapter, "The aim of life is appreciation: there is no sense in not appreciating things, and there is no sense in having more of them if you have less appreciation of them. It matters very little whether a man is discontented in the name of pessimism or progress if his discontent does in fact paralyse his power of appreciating what he has got. The real difficulty of man is not to enjoy lamp posts or landscapes, not to enjoy dandelions or chops, but to enjoy enjoyment." And he puts his finger on the malady of the newest poets, whose "philosophy of the dandelion is not that all weeds are flowers but rather that all flowers are weeds. Indeed, it reaches to something like nightmare, as if Nature itself were unnatural. Perhaps this is why so many of them try desperately to write about machinery, touching which nobody yet has disputed the Argument from Design. . . . But whatever the reason, I have read modern poets obviously meant to make grass seem something merely scrubby and prickly and repugnant like an unshaven chin."

Another poet but of different calibre who held strong and individual views on poets and poetry was Edgar Allan Poe, who is dealt with very faithfully by Edward Shanks in the latest addition to Macmillan's eminent English men of Letters series (3s. 6d.), a model of literary biography and appraisement. The "Martin Chuzzlewit" side of Poe's weak character is not over-stressed. He is treated seriously and particularly not only as a man who wrote poems, stories and criticism but also as a man who was a vital link in a process of intellectual development, as one who was certainly the symbol, and perhaps the inspiring prophet, of a great spiritual movement in the half-century that followed his death. Mr. Shanks shows that as a poet, Poe was frustrated and unsuccessful. "He was harassed and embarrassed all his life by his circumstances and his weaknesses. But other men, no less heavily handicapped, whether by temperament or by material things, have left behind them work which gives a stronger sense of substantial achievement. Baudelaire and Verlaine, for example, of whom one naturally thinks, had lives which were in some respects as miserable as that of Poe. But *Fleurs du Mal* and *Sagesse* are poetry achieved, whole and perfect. Poe's work in verse, is, even at its best, only poetry desired, seen at a distance and imperfectly realized."

Mr. Shanks, with great discernment, considers that "Poe might serve as a strong proof of the old belief that all poetry exists already elsewhere and is merely transcribed by an earthly hand from the heavenly original. But the same thought can be put in a different way in terms of a more modern psychology. Poetry, let us say, comes into existence in the subconscious mind and must be brought thence by the conscious effort of the poet. This would account for the odd sensation experienced by many poets that now and then there is a cessation of the true interior flow, during which they must either be silent or do what they can with a deliberate use of intellect." Mr. Herbert Reed had something to say on this matter at a recent meeting of the Poets' Fellowship. Poe himself had clearly had something of this sort in mind when he said "one half of *Paradise Lost* is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, inevitably, with corresponding depressions." He adduced this example in support of his assertion that a poem ought not to exceed one hundred lines. But it is at least probable, Mr. Shanks thinks, that that belief sprang from his own experience of the briefness and intermittency of true poetic inspiration, which is felt when the poet does seem to be getting news from some other tract of being, even if it be only an infrequently accessible tract of his own mind. "Poe's poetry is, to put it shortly, blurred. It has character enough to make us feel the existence . . . somewhere . . . of more than the writer has been able to capture in his words. He babbles of a lovely music which no one else has ever heard but he can do no more than hum a phrase here and there, and that often in a cracked voice and out of tune. But, even so, he does convince us that he has heard something not heard by any other man."

Mr. Shanks does not overlook the fact that "Poe was, at any rate potentially, a great technician and innovator in verse" (John Davidson paid tribute to "the exquisite invention of the most original genius in words the world has ever known, Edgar Allan Poe".) It is, however, as the first of the Symbolists, or as Mr. Shanks prefers to call him, "the first of the Decadents," that Poe had his greatest influence and justifies the present examination, for, although according to Mr. Shanks, "there are no more Decadents in the world, it was not a vain effort. It has left its mark plainly on the history of thought and literature. It made a vigorous and impressive protest against the habits of mind into which humanity was falling during the first half of the nineteenth century." And Poe and his disciples "brought new beauty into the world . . . That is the final thing to be said of Poe himself."

In *The Unexpected Years* (Cape, 10s. 6d.) Mr. Laurence Housman gives a diverting garrulous account of a pleasant social and literary pilgrimage. More will be heard of his poems and plays now that his caustic brother, of whom some characteristic stories are told, has passed on and the ban on the *major opus* of this much censored playwright has been removed.

Another notable new book of the same genre but with different atmospherics is the autobiography of Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself*, which Macmillans have published in handy form, uniform with the ordinary editions of Kipling's works instead of the usual expensive and bloated octavo form. In vivid Kiplingese, that will recall the writer to the many friends known and unknown for whom the book was written, a very individual account is given of the author's wanderings but little about his work. Men and women, ways and means are described rather than authorship revealed or theories exploited. It is as it should be the racy narrative of an observer; the poems are scarcely mentioned.

The Autobiography of Thomas Wright of Olney (Herbert Jenkins, 15s.) is characteristic of the indefatigable bookmaker who was devoted to Cowper, and found time to promote the Blake, Payne and other societies. He might have been most interesting, vivid and selective in a work that is often dull and a chronicle of small beer.

On March 11th Dr. Idris Bell will address the Kensington centre on Welsh poetry.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The winners of our Award this time are all of them authors already known to readers of THE POETRY REVIEW. We especially welcome a contribution by Cyril Taylor, who has not entered this competition for some little time. His poem attains the high level which he has set for himself. The same can be said, in each case, of Mrs. Vallance, Miss Dougan and Dennis Hinde.

The awards are as follows :

GERTRUDE VALLANCE for her Ode, " His Majesty, the King " ;
O. C. DOUGAN for her lyric " To Elizabeth " ;
CYRIL G. TAYLOR for his lyric " Final Denouncement " ; and
DENISE HINDE for his poem " The Tyrrheri," which might be classified either as an ode, or even as a poem in epic style.

Amongst the authors HIGHLY COMMENDED, especial mention should be made of T. E. CASSON, JOSEPHINE MAY, UNA MONK and VIOLET RAWNSLEY, and also of JOAN PARMENTER on account of her promise at the age of fifteen years.

HIGHLY COMMENDED :

T. E. Casson, Pennington ;
B. D.-H. Dix, Folkestone ;
Constance Farmar, Farnham ;
Mary Gordon, Kingston ;
Katharine Kennedy, Albuquerque, New Mexico ;
Ada Lawry, Broadstairs ;
R. McKie, Hove ;
Doris Major, Hendon, N.W.;
Josephine May, Trimley St. Mary, Suffolk ;
Una Monk, Oxford ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
J. Parmenter, London, E. ;
Violet Rawnsley, Chatham ;
Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham ;

COMMENDED :

Vera Arlett, Worthing ;
Lily E. F. Barry, Montreal ;
Rosa A. Berry, Hucclecote ;
R. D. Birch, Taunton ;
Greta Briggs, Clacton ;
Magdalene Burmeister, Great Berd, Kansas ;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood ;
" Cloudrider," Budapest ;
H. Escott, Bradford ;
Marguerite Evans, Pontypridd ;
Clare Gay, London, N. ;
Lucy C. Lanchester, Beaconsfield ;
Margaret Locherbie-Goff, London, N.;
M. H., Gidea Park ;
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport, Mon. ;
H. E. Holland, London, N.W. ;
Margaret Legate, Durban ;
Enid W. Mark, Purley ;
E. H. Ray, Hengold ;
I. Savundranayagam, Colombo ;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate ;
Zuella Sterling, Concord, U.S.A. ;
Robert Stone, Bristol ;
J. Urquhart, London, S.W. ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
Jessica Walters, London, W.

We regret to record the death of the Rev. Dr. Ernest J. B. Kirtlan, for many years a vice-president of The Poetry Society and one of its lecturers and examiners. In many obituaries tribute is paid to the " brilliant gifts " and " vital, picturesque, flaming personality " of our old friend and devoted colleague. As one writer pointed out, " Mr. Kirtlan was one of those brilliant, picturesque, arresting personalities that come into the world few and far between. His eyes would blaze with light as his words would flame with fire. Ruggedly picturesque in appearance, flamboyant till some called him theatrical in manner, he was essentially sincere, utterly unconscious of his effect on others, striving only to tell the truth as it was revealed to him by the bonfire illumination of his mind. He was poet and dramatist, both merged into and expressed by his office as preacher or the Word. He was a mystic, and felt the invisible presences. Incidentally he lectured, with amazing brilliancy and interpretative power, mainly on the classic literature of England. He translated and edited Early English romances, such as " Pearl " and " Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." It was in recognition of his literary work that he received the honorary degree of D.D. from the University of St. Andrews. At London University he took honours in English literature. Mr. Kirtlan was no mere scholar. He was more even than a brilliant scholar. He took literature for his own, re-created it, and made it alive again."

Another friend, Mr. Frederick Lawrence, F.R.I.B.A., sends us the following personal note, which many friends and particularly the young people who drew inspiration from his vitality when he heard them will be glad to read : " I was caught up in the splendour of his exuberance thirty-two years ago. Kirtlan ! to how many young men has that name meant manliness raised to the point of genius.

" I should fill too much space if I told of all the things we did together from the making of books to sailing in a yachting race.

" He wrote his *Sir Gawain* in the early days and I illustrated it. It was sent to a great London publisher, was approved, and then by some strange mischance was lost. There was no copy, and years afterwards we both sat down and did it all over again.

" In those days he would read plays aloud to us ; Shakespeare, Ibsen, Maeterlinck. When he wished he had a voice like the sound of many waters. Mystery was in it and that genius which could well nigh make the Grail itself visible before one. So near to being a Master was he.

" No man had a purer literary taste. One had the Elizabethan Poets or Keats, or Coleridge gloriously at breakfast while the piano sang golden and glad in the next room. Most meals at that time occupied two rooms. The house throbbed and lived to great Art.

" Others may read as an accomplishment, Kirtlan would read Shakespeare all day and most of the night because there seemed insufficient time to get every thing in. Life was not large enough for his exuberant love of things.

" And then he moved to Hove and the sea caught him. I have known him, from London, take train to Dover and cross to Calais and return by the next boat *because* there was a gale. How many times since, lurking shamed in some obscure corner of that wretched craft have I envied his kinship with the sea. . . .He *was* the sea—turbulent, riotous, fretting at obstructions, splendid. The caverns echoed his shout, the shingle roared in response. Mystery was in the light on his horizon. The stars shone within him. The storm was him, Yes, all these things were part of the sea and of him, and one other, he was Big.

" I have known him as I believe no other man has known him, I have disagreed with him ten thousand times, but I have never known him do a petty thing. There could be a grandeur about him."

J. MARION SOPER (Exeter) on EDWIN FAULKNER, POET : With the death of Mr. Edwin Faulkner, whose poems of the West Country have long been known to readers of the *Western Morning News*, Devon loses a verse writer of more than ordinary attainments. Poet, essayist, philosopher, literary critic, scholar of Oxford in the Magdalen College tradition, Edwin Faulkner was the man of books. Equally, and more innately, he was of the out-of-doors, of the open sky and wide horizon, eye and ear awake and attuned to the mystery and magic of life of the world of Nature. Somewhat of a recluse and little inclined to seek out his fellows, he still liked people and to be among them, and was ready to talk with the folk of the countryside anywhere. And among his friends, at our little house parties with good talk going round, he was at his happiest and best. That rather rare blend of contemplative and humanist set the key to his poetry. Especially sensitive to the artistic as he was, his work often shows an exquisite fineness of touch and perfection of finish. But it is never artificial ; it came out of his life ; out of what he himself essentially was. Of its strength and fibre it can only be said that faith for him was not perhaps an ever-burning radiance ; not a central sun uplighting all vision. It came in gleams chasing the shadows and scattering the illusive mists. Never was he the cynic. Here are some lines characteristic of his mind :

" Tell me, O sea, what is the goal
Of man's insatiable soul ?
And the sea answered ' Child, go rest
On the great Mother's kindly breast ;
Go to thy playthings and thy toys,
Sweeter are these than dust and noise.'

And still I cried, ' O ancient sea,
Hold I a clue unknown to thee ?
For if it be not all a jest,
Something it means, this rich unrest.

And if oft-time I seem to be
Fate's manifested irony
Out of the tumult something sings
And something lifts me as with wings.
Often I see within my dreams
Strange and unconquerable gleams,
And twixt the bars of Time there slips
One moment of apocalypse '."

When as at present, our versifiers seem bent on antagonising people against poetry, verse that does possess quality and beauty is to be valued, and one is glad to learn that a book of Edwin Faulkner's previously unpublished poems will be issued in due time by his literary executor.

Obscurity in Verse

To the Editor of The Poetry Review.

Sir,—In a recent discussion of a certain type of modern verse, Mr. Trevor Hughes wafted me airily to my "traditional retreat," adding, "it is easy to prophesy that posterity will ignore our obscurantists." It is; and I do so unhesitatingly. The history of literature reminds us persistently that posterity *does* ignore the dealers in ambiguities. The Greek poet Lycophron is a name to a few. He was obscure. Euripides, on the other hand, wrote clearly, and when translated no less clearly by Gilbert Murray, the million applaud. Why do anthologists seize upon Blake's "The Tiger," "Spring," and "To The Muses"? They are clear. Why do these same anthologists ignore "The Mental Traveller"? It is obscure. What need to multiply instances? Browning's well-merited fame rests not upon "Sordello," which his contemporaries rightly or wrongly considered obscure, but on such pieces as "The Bishop Orders His Tomb In St. Praxed's Church," which so far as perspicacity of diction goes, could be read understandingly by a schoolboy. His famous lyric beginning "Oh, to be in England" is limpid as dew. In my opinion, Mr. Trevor Hughes regards tradition too cavalierly. There is virtue in tradition. It embodies human experience, and the past affords a clue to the future. If a man spring from an unbroken line of burglarious antecedents, that is his family tradition. Will Mr. Hughes engage him as butler? As a traditionalist, I shall not.

Kenneth Hare.

Bussage, Glos.
Author of *Green Fields*, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, etc.

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review.)

Sir,—As a reader for many years of The Poetry Review—and a most interested observer of the conflict at present being waged on modern poetry, I venture to send you a translation from the German of the exquisite poet Uhland, "The Chapel Bell."

Dimly, solemnly, wafted down
From the heights where the mourners file,
The muffled toll from the rocks that frown
Is heard in the vales that smile.

Hark! shepherd boy, to that note so sad,
He too in the vale was free—
And the dirge for thy comrade, shepherd lad,
One day they will chant for thee.

Roehampton, Jan. 14. NEVILE A. D. WALLIS.

Sir,—In his otherwise admirable article on "Victory or Defeat," S. W. Powell quotes from *Macbeth* the famous passage beginning: "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow," and tells us that "here it was not Macbeth speaking; it was Shakespeare. The words are out of character with Macbeth."

May I be allowed to give three reasons for disagreeing with this view?

(i) Shakespeare was not only a great poet, but a great playwright. Are we really to suppose that at the climax of one of his great tragedies he suddenly succumbed to a temptation which at such a point the veriest tyro would avoid, and put into the mouth of his chief character a speech inconsistent with that character, but expressing his own mind? That is not the way great plays are written.

(ii) Is it conceivable that this passage did express the mind of Shakespeare?

Seeing that Shakespeare is generally thought to have held the mirror up to Nature with unique success, and that he did so by writing a number of plays packed with "significance" and insight into the spiritual laws of human life, how are we to suppose that he looked upon life as

"a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing"?

(iii) Finally, is it true that this passage is inconsistent with the character of Macbeth?

Macbeth was no vulgar criminal. He was a man of sensitive emotions and vivid poetical imagination, and not without a conscience.

The different way in which this crime and its failure affected the two criminals constitutes the subtle psychological interest of the play. That for Macbeth every vestige of what was good or even rational in life should seem to be blotted out was not only consistent with his mentality, but is the stroke of genius by which Shakespeare completed the immortal portrait of a ruined soul.

St. Jean-de-Luz. J. P. MALLESON.

THE RAWNSLEY GOLD MEDAL

The Right Hon. Viscountess Buckmaster, vice-president of The Poetry Society, adjudicating at the ninth annual competition for the Rawnsley Gold Medal for the reading of poetry on February 6th said that although she expected most of the readers had studied their poems and knew them by heart, it made a great difference to them to have the atmosphere of appreciation of poetry always apparent in The Poetry Society's library. She had given marks on 100 per cent. basis, alloting 30 per cent. for interpretation, comprehension of the poem and the ability to make its meaning clear, 30 per cent. for variety, or light and shade, attack, virility and the avoidance of monotony, 20 per cent. for music and rhythm; 10 per cent. for voice-production, and well-sustained, easy delivery; and 10 per cent. for diction.

The Rawnsley Gold Medal was awarded to Delphine Petters with 80 marks. E. Marjorie Day was placed *proxime accessit.*

Lady Buckmaster emphasized the need to give the meaning behind the words, and not only the words. It was one of her greatest ambitions to raise the standard of verse speaking and reading. Her criticism included the following points: Readers should avoid giving an over dramatic atmosphere where it is not needed, so that the genuinely dramatic pieces stand out. In one case while the sheer loveliness of the poem was appreciated the euphony was not given as much point as might have been, and vitality was lacking. Pronunciation should be based on rhyme and rhythm. It was better to pronounce "toll" to rhyme with "sole," so that the sound was repeated. One poem was too hurried in parts to give the necessary emphasis. It should have been treated more broadly; it was too much all on a level. There should be pauses between ideas, instead of rushing on from point to point. Differentiation of mood and action should be observed, and poem production carefully studied.

Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, who make a feature of books on elocution and public speaking, have added another useful and authoritative volume, *Master Your Voice*, a Concise Practical Method of Voice and Speech Training for Teachers, Actors, Telephonists, and all Public Speakers and Students of Elocution (2s. 6d.) by Nancy Hull, who has many professional qualifications for dealing with this subject, and is a teacher, lecturer and examiner in Sheffield, and a Gold Medallist of The Poetry Society. This instructive volume is an admirable introduction to vocal technique and art—so comprehensive, intelligible and practical that all who need such a text-book will find it exactly suited to their requirements.

Mrs. George H. Wilson, Wichita Falls, Texas, writes: "I made a wholesale list of poetry publications recently, wishing to obtain something that suited my desire for good poetry and things concerning poetry; The Poetry Review is the most splendid answer to that quest."

GENTLEMEN, THE KING

TO the high saga! to the high history!
That bids the heart stand by,
When the cup is lifted high,
And, with the toast, the common man is swept
Into the legend—into a territory
Enchanted, unbeknown.

As one, who, blindly walking in the plain,
Finds himself musing on uncharted seas,
Watching a fleet of argosies in flight,
Silver, from bow to stern, with unreflecting light;
And hears faint bugles in the wind,
From an unknown harbour calling;
And, on the waters, silver rain is falling,
And a siren sings.

Then, turning to the land,
Blazed on the crystal of the air, he sees,
Down the sheer steep of ages, a gay band
Of knights and ladies, at the gallop, ride;
Their palfreys and their pennants streaming bright
Across the centuries, in a rainbow light;
With, here, a queen, more lovely than a bride,
And, there, a king, the most resplendent knight.
Then, as he looks, in lengthening recession,
The cavalcade is gone, the argosy;
And he must view, again,
The uneventful plain, the old, familiar town,
With little streets and little houses going up and down,
And little men walking and talking,
Who never tell that: "Once upon a time,"
Nor listen to the old, crusading rhyme.

Yet, ever again, the far, faint bugles cry
The high adventure; the music marches on;
Again the generations slide along
The revolving disc of history,
And birth and death are the singing of a song,
Splendid, but brief as the stars,
That rise to sink again.

But to-day, the high song rises, the guests are shriven,
The glass once more is raised,
And, for one shining instant, after the toast is given,
No name is praised,
No word is spoken,
But the rose burns deep in the wine,
The glass is broken.

This is the moment when the King goes by,
This the commemoration ;
Trumpets will triumph later, bugles will cry,
After the celebration ;
But, when the glass is broken,
And no word spoken,
Then, *then*, the echoes ring :
" His Majesty, the King."

GERTRUDE VALLANCE.

Cape Town, South Africa.

SUNSET IN MAY

EASTWARDS a far-flung cirrus plume
Ensnares late sunlight to illume
Its crest with hues of orient.
Prismatic tinctures tantalize,
Patterned in weft of west'ring skies,
Kaleidoscopically blent.
Soon fingered shadows file anew
Across long meadows where the dew
Doubles the dusk with cold intent.
All pales into translucency :
One snow-embowered cherry-tree
Kneels like a ghostly penitent
Before the altar of the night
And radiates supernal light
Beneath the darkling firmament.

E. CURT PETERS.

FINAL RENOUNCEMENT

I SHALL not see you again.
At evening I shall turn away my eyes
From the bitter sun, watch the moon rise
Without thought of you. In the morning
You will not be at my window
Coming in with the light.
I shall not hear you
In the wind's cry, nor be near you
When the night, quieter than death,
Makes a perfumed wreath of your name.
And poised between sleeping and waking,
It will not be you, that you and yet not-you,
That floating cobweb of dream
Lit for a moment's moment of time
With glittering rime—
Gone,
Ere the clock moves even one second on.

I shall not see you again.
Your face shall stare from the world
A blind mirror emptied of loveliness,
And like a whipped dog
Memory shall follow my heel.
Where you have walked shall spring again
New and untrodden grass, the hills be levelled
To meaningless plains. Dishevelled
Grief shall shake the wild hair from her eyes,
The stars recover their brilliant pattern
Of candid indifference.
Each day shall add its infinitesimal morsel of stone
To the windowless, shadowless dwelling called Forget.
Till, at last, there shall be no trace of you
Anywhere. No sudden ambush to wound the heart.
No corner even remotely turned
To show where your light once burned.
Nor shrine, nor burial-place. Nothing. Nothing to say
Love ever passed this way.

CYRIL G. TAYLOR.

FACTORY WORKERS

WE have no songs to sing (they said).
Our vast machine that spins and reels
Provides the hum and whirr of wheels,
The only living sound . . . (they said)
And all the rest of us are dead.
Although the sunlight seeks us still
And sparrows gather on the slates,
The Spring can find no echoing thrill
Among our little loves and hates.
All day, we drown in stifling noise
That reeks of fetid oil and sweat,
Released, we snatch such fleeting joys
In moving shadows and forget
To-morrow's hurdy-gurdy turning. . . .
Turning . . . turning . . .
We forget,
With an uncomprehended yearning,
All the beauty with the fret.
Love, outside the sooty pane,
Lurks with laughter in the rain ;
Nor do either wait in vain.
Yet our death is absolute !
Aching lips and hearts are mute
To question and to answering. . . .
For we have no songs to sing.

JOYCE T. ROWE.

ON READING A MODERN LOVE TRAGEDY

HE still has this ;
You cannot take away
Nor hide yourself
From his bright Day.
You cannot kill, destroy
His brightest joy ;
Nor yet conceal
Your cruelty, nor love ;
For on this page
His peace, his rage
Shines white, burns gold.
This book will live,
For he did write
With ink as bright
As that dear book
The old monks drew,
Their letters scarlet, blue.

M. E. MITCHELL.

THE POET'S JOB

IT should be described, it seems, in three words. The poet's job, surely, is to write poetry.

Yes.

But to-day we are confronted with the fact that a body of literary opinion, not inconsiderable, believes that the poet's job is with politics and social reform. There is no concealment about this. He is not asked to pretend that his poetry is pure poetry and to work political and social propaganda into it; at pain of being ignored as a frivolous person he is commanded to have certain political and social ideas and to make his poetry out of them. He is called on to do the impossible in two ways: to write to order, and to make poetry out of material which is not the material of poetry. And the weaker spirits yield to this demand. Unhappily, though they are the weaker, they are not in every case the least talented. If those who thus allow themselves to be made instruments of political and social movements were all of them pseudo-poets, we could smile. But we know, who have read their work, that, while some of them are, others are not. Rather than miss the only public which appears to them at present, they have abused their natural powers; and powers so used can seldom be restored. Whether of the body or the mind, the prostitution of any faculty first dulls and afterwards destroys that faculty; it may be the faculty of love or the faculty of poetry or any faculty we possess. Though the prostitution of poetry to the ends mentioned has not been long in action, it has been in action long enough to produce its effects. When the victims, in moments of uneasiness, discuss poetry, trying to discover what it means for them, and what hope the future holds for it, they show that they have lost all true conception of what poetry is. Retribution has come swiftly for them.

We may sympathize with those who have been seduced, and allow that the easiness of the achievement was not all that counted with them; that they were actuated also (at least in some cases) by an honest dissatisfaction with the world of to-day. He would indeed be either an idiot or a complete egoist who was satisfied with the world around him, since to-day, comprehensively viewed, it presents a spectacle of chaos, insanity and cruelty, not to speak of bestial stupidity, unparallelled for hundreds of years. And it is argued that it is the poet's job to assist, as far as he can, in setting that right.

It is, in so far as it is every man's duty to help towards that end—or, if he cannot help, not to add to the frenzy. But it is not the duty of the poet *qua* poet to do this, and that is where the mistake comes in. The reasoning is specious, since it is contended that the poet can influence matter through mind ; but the logic is faulty. It is no more the poet's job than it is the doctor's job or the policeman's job or the grocer's job. It is no more and it is no less. The doctor, the policeman, the grocer and the poet are all, as human beings, required to assist in the establishment of political and social order, but the doctor *qua* doctor, the policeman *qua* policeman, the grocer *qua* grocer and the poet *qua* poet are emphatically not required to do this. The political and social reformer is. It is his job. The others are required, respectively, to heal the sick, to protect the public, to sell groceries, and to write, at the spirit's bidding, poetry. If any of the three first-named, instead of attending strictly to his proper duties, were to appear before us as a political or social propagandist, we should consider it an extreme impertinence and a grave failure ; but when the poet does this we are expected to commend him. It does not even stop at that. We are expected to condemn him if he doesn't do it, on the grounds that his intellect must be contemptible and his heart in the wrong place.

Let us examine that specious argument, that it is the poet's duty to assist in political and social movements because he can influence matter through mind. It may be agreed that he can. But not by abandoning his rôle of poet and becoming a propagandist, for the moment he becomes a propagandist he ceases to be a poet. The moment any artist becomes a propagandist he ceases to be an artist. You may serve God and Mammon (perhaps), but you cannot serve them both at the same time.

We do not have to talk of art for art's sake (which is like talking of physic for physic's sake), but we must talk of art for life's sake when we talk of it at all—not of art for the sake of peace or revolution, fascism or communism, unemployment, slum clearance, or any of the hundred things which are troubling us now. Art is concerned with the whole, not with its parts, though it may treat of its parts in its concern with the whole. But it must not try to imprison its universal force in one pocket of the whole. It would be like trying to pour the sea into a teacup.

Admittedly, many artists, particularly artists in prose, artists of the novel and the drama, have accomplished needed reforms, or at any rate prepared the mind of the public for them. But they have not achieved this in their capacity of artist. They have achieved it in their capacity of reformer, and they have violated their art to achieve it. The reform may have been worth the violation : I will not say. If any poet thinks he can do likewise, let him, if he desires, attempt it ; but let him not confuse this job with the job of poetry. To do that is to act a lie ; and the lie will in the end corrupt him, rendering him impotent as a poet. He, of all men, has a sacred task : to uplift man's spirit in the world of the spirit, not to guide or control him in the world of fact. In the end, it is true, the world of the spirit shapes the world of fact ; but it cannot be done directly. The world of fact has its proper executives. To think that the world of fact can be moved directly by the world of the spirit is the fallacy of the doctrinaire, that guileless ineffective, whom history teaches nothing.

The impudence of those who call on the poet to assist them in the task which is properly theirs, however incompetent they may be for it, is equalled only by the abjectness of the poet who servilely obeys them, forgetting that he is of the breed which calls no man master. If civilization cannot save itself without employing the poet to prop it up in the same way that a navvy might prop up a wall, civilization had better crash : it does not deserve to have poets. But it is not so ; there are hands enough without the poet's, for the manual work of saving the shaken fabric.

The poet alone has the vision which can in time save human hearts, without which nothing is worth saving. Whether the medium be verse or prose, music, painting or sculpture, it makes no difference, if he has the vision and communicates it. S. W. POWELL.

LOVE CANNOT DIE

IT cannot die as these green pastures die
When stealthy winter breathes a frost upon them.
Love is a deathless rose, and death's sepulchral snows
Are mocked, with summer's spirit still among them.

It cannot die as these inadequate hands
Mad with the spell of song you cast upon them.
These are imperfect things ; tuneless, discordant strings.
Love cannot strike one perfect chord upon them.

It cannot die, though all its symbols die ;
Though lips grow mute, and hands have stillness on them.
Sped from this poem of clay, love must live on for aye.
It cannot die ! H. ESCOTT.

BRIDGES

IN *my* country, in my homeland,
The roads go on and over,
And on either hand are the green or the brown fields,
Where the larks soar and the kestrels hover.

There I am a man, my mind opens,
Flows to the land's limit, the sky's height,
Calm as the broad fields, as the road ardent,
Going on, over, and out of sight.

Here I am an ant, ant among millions,
Blind, belly-bound in the heap,
Only on bridges rails or rivers go under
Can I look and long, flow out, flow back, and weep.
M. NEWTON.

Six Poems by T. Weston Ramsey

EQUATION

NOT for your beauty—beauty is a scroll
That Time reads over and then folds away
In secrecy, with all the gathered toll
Of tribute which the passing seasons pay;
Nor for your laughter—laughter is a bubble
Which breaks and is forgotten in a sigh:
These lightly running ripples do not trouble
The deeper waters where your jewels lie;
But for your love, which came in the dark hour,
Which found me fallen and which made me new,
Asking for nothing, giving all its power—
For your strong love, I will give love to you.
Nor let there be compare of small and great,
But each to other equal in estate.

TO A SCIENTIST, 1,000 YEARS HENCE

THE stark frame forged, with blood you fed
Your dark automaton,
Latticed the ribs, and rivetted
The steel-blue muscles on;

Taught the huge marionette to move
And stay at your command—
Yet for all this it will not love
Nor hate its maker's hand.

And though it breathe and suffer pain
And toil with careful art,
There is no lightning in its brain,
No thunder in the heart;

No dumb delight in gazing on
Swift beauty passing by—
No tears will your automaton
Let fall; no smile, no sigh.

TOLOMEA

NUMBER the pains of hell—torment of burning,
The whip's keen fang, the keener edge of steel;
Labour of Sisyphus ever returning,
The thirst of Tantalus, Ixion's wheel;
Snake tresses of the grim Eumenides,
Wind driving ever, rain that ceases not,
Foul mud, dark scalding rivers, knotted trees,
The bloody teeth that champ Iscariot—
There is an anguish deeper still than these,
That knows nor change, nor turning, nor lament,
Sealed up within the crusts of ice that freeze
To second death, nor give to grief its vent;
Where eyes that burn, yet never more will sleep,
Vizored with frozen anguish, cannot weep.

FEBRUARY 14th

THE sun ascends, slow sign by sign,
Nearly encircled is the ring,
The thorn that bears the sharpest spine
Will wear the whitest flower in spring.

And if the winter frost has set
A stubborn wall around the bud,
Let the sun scale the parapet
And drown the citadel in blood.

The branch that bore but fangs before
Bears now the softness of the flower,
The molten wax wherein once more
He seals the charter of his power.

So on the spirals of ascent
He wears the rose for coronal,
Of deathless beauty testament,
And loveliness perennial.

SONNET II

(SHAKESPEARE)

EYES, will you never tire of gazing on
The silver feast so daintily outspread,
Within the limits of the tetragon,
The white, the grape-vine blue, the molten red?
Tongue, will you never tire of subtlety,
Throwing the shuttle up and down the loom?
You weave as tenuous a tapestry
As ever mocked the lawns with April bloom.
Mind, will you never let desire be still,
Let peace a moment render the heart dumb
—The heart, that noisy thoroughfare, where still
Dark streams of whisperers foregather? Come,
Come, sexton, come—perform thy sorry part,
And fill with mould this false and hollow heart!

CATULLUS—CARMEN V

(A PARAPHRASE)

LET us live, my Lesbia, let us love,
Nor heed old age with envy peeping—
When our brief sun has set, my love,
We shall have time enough for sleeping.

Kiss me a hundred times, and then
A second hundred add to these;
Reckon a thousand, and again
More thousands yet; that if one sees

Our silent, stolen kisses, he
To sum their reckoning will fail—
Since we, my dearest love, since we
Ourselves can number not the tale.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

SWINBURNE

April 5, 1837–1937

SPIRIT of air and fire,
Spirit of Light,
Is the voice of thy desire
One with the night?

Can it then be so long
That thou wast born and art dead,
The feet of a century stamping
Over thy head?

Can it then be so long,
Poet, forever young,
Since Freedom woke to the song
Of thy bright lips sung?

Is it good now, O poet,
In thine Elysian fold,
With Queen Semiramis combing
Thy hair, that again is gold—

Thy slender fingers binding
The shoe of Persephone
Where she stoops from her winding
A daffodil wreath for thee.

Where the gulls wail above thee
And Cornish breakers call,
Let them walk soft that love thee
Nor rouse thee at all.

ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUER.

Into *A Little Primer for Home and School* (H. Milford, 2s. 6d.) Alfred Alleyn has collected, arranged and translated, hymns and prayers for all occasions suitable to children. Many of the tunes and verses are his own composition. The book should be useful in schools.

A Kensington member in renewing her subscription, assures us that " The intense relief afforded by the atmosphere of The Poetry Society to a member who passes a considerable portion of her days in slums can hardly be imagined."

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAURENCE WHISTLER

IT is always interesting to trace the development of any poet's thought and technique ; if the poet happens to be a good one, it becomes the rarest of adventures. When, some four years ago, I read Mr. Laurence Whistler's *Armed October*, I found evidence among its very imperfections of a hidden harvest only maturity could glean. Two years later came a change of note. *Four Walls* showed the same ardent and delicate approach to deeper problems ; and now, with the *Emperor Heart*, Mr. Whistler has gained a sure mastery of his technique and fashioned for himself a style of curious beauty and precision, which shows small trace of its derivatives. There is " something magic, and of the innermost soul of poetry, " on nearly every page of this new volume ; and it is because I think that its publication is an event of major literary importance that I am making this inadequate attempt to analyse *The Emperor Heart*.

Never before have there been critics of poetry so numerous and so divergent in their views as to-day. They have fallen inevitably into two camps—as old as Troy, though they have many labels. Mere management of words can make poetry of one kind ; mere complexity of thought, clearly and concisely expressed, can make poetry of another. The *Lake Isle of Innisfree* is a poem to some ; Herbert Spencer's definition of life or the Theorems of Euclid are poems to others. Modernism claims John Donne as its spiritual ancestor, and has revived magnificently his " poetry of talk." But there are two John Donnes. One of them wrote the beautifully woven pattern of thought called the *Extasie ;* the other marred the *Anatomie of the World* by a frigidly subtle wit and a crazed passion of hyperbole. Much of modern poetry imitates the verbal conceits and arid complexities of the wrong Donne. A not uncommon reaction to poetry which is both musical and intelligible is to complain that it is not " arresting,"—in other words, to complain that it is neither cacophanous nor obscure. Uncouthness in poetry is too often called a " new angle of vision"—as if the fact that a man cannot express his thought necessarily means that his thought is too profound to be expressed. Jaded with the last pale sunset imitations of the 'nineties, the critic demands that poetry shall be New, whatever of the old it has to sacrifice. And so, too often, it is the oddity of the poet rather than the authenticity of his message that engrosses critical attention; till the only point of contact between the twentieth century and, say, William Collins is the fact that he used to run howling like a dog about the aisles of Chichester Cathedral. Much modern poetry is like Baudelaire dyeing his hair pale green: or Rimbaud trailing through the streets of Paris a lobster on a silver chain. Lobsters also are both inarticulate and highly-coloured: their movements too are erratic, unpredictable and without apparent object.

The man who professes to enjoy modern poetry because of, not in spite of, its obscurity can admit to the hierarchy of poets only a rare and curious few. Obsessed with the New, he will tolerate only a very carefully selected company of the old. Old words will be dead words to him: and he will shudder at such an expression as, "Dew and darkness for the spirit fall." You cannot mention dew in connection with twilight; it has been done. And "the stertorous yokel dungs the sod," where once the shepherd heard beyond the hill the tinklings of the distant bells. Well, if there is poetry also in dung, there is no poetry in the mere substitution of dung for dew.

But Poetry, the wine made of honey and the blood of Kvasir the Wise, has small concern with argument. The thoughts that

> "go up into the stars of rhyme
> Or flit between the Scorpion and the Crown"

keep their immortality unscarred by praise or blame Hazlitt once said that, whenever he saw a child's kite flying in the air it pulled at his heart. Certain things in poetry pull at the heart in that way, sadden, exalt, enchant us, Heaven knows how. And where that spell is absent, poetry is absent too, for which no amount of originality or complex juggling with words can compensate.

Poetry is a perfect fusion of thought, melody and image; it is the revelation of the commonplace seen from a new angle, and therefore seen with the vividness of a vision. It is a magical conjuring with words, till they seem to set alight even the most sober of their neighbours. The sense of poetry is far nearer to the wild unreason of Lear than to the logic of every day; for, if it is the function of prose to "dwell in men's business and bosoms," it is the function of poetry to set fantastic torches to the commonplace. The flame of these torches lights up page after page of *The Emperor Heart*.

Here is a book written with that rare combination of richness and restraint, of sensitiveness and clarity, which you will not often find outside the seventeenth century.

> "Chatterton, before he killed himself
> Danced seventeen times around a minor star
> On a great stone still fiery at the core,
> Poor boy if he had waited for ten dances more
> He would have been where the eternal are."

There is nothing particularly remarkable about this opening, except that it tilts the ordinary to just that queer angle where it mirrors poetry. Here is the same fusion of thought and image that you will find now and then in stray couplets, thought concentrated in a still, crystalline mould:

> "When love distils the darting wing
> To a dark shadow, that is Spring,"

or here, in the opening verse of the *Glass Chandelier*, which, with its sharp visualization, its melodious and serpentine interweaving of sense and sound, is the purest magic:

> "The fire upon the books
> Lifts its hurried looks:
> It reads by tiny flames
> The sad and golden names.
> The wind at the window bars
> Troubles the glass of stars.
> The stars in the window pane
> Alter like rain."

"The brotherless Heliades melt in such amber teares . . ." Everywhere is this same fusion of form and content: this directness of imaginative perception which can compare the sound of an axe to an "uncouth bird," or of a saw to "a puritan singing, dark and slow," or picture the wind

"Blowing golden evening up the land
Out of the clappers of Atlantic bells."

The whole of the *Strange Comedy* is built on a procession of such metaphors. It begins with images drawn from strife and voyagings over desperate seas; it closes in festal ecstasy, and the moonlight's "passionless fire upon the saintly gaze."

There are lines that contain the authentic measures of great poetry, that recall the mastery of Donne:

"The obliterated sweetness of a smile."

"A little sad brown hair and dreamless bone."

"Nor fire look out of you with bloodshot eyes
Once, and bequeath a quiet skull of time,"

or lines that have the quality of paint, flashing a sudden vision upon the mind:

"Churches in the valley told
Dark in the towers, their tumbling gold."

"One tenuous frill
Of muslin sunlight."

"Time with a buttonhole
Of your bright and dangerous ways."

"Great empty Naves enquiring of the stars,"

where the loud, open, echoing vowels give such a desolate effect of emptiness and space.

What is poetry, after all, but "words, words, words,"—enchanted words, magic words, that can make of the simplest thought so profound an incantation as this:

"And see in vision from another year
Another village in an evening's dust
And in the empty schoolroom's diamond panes
The little pots of fading maidenhair
Among the children's crooked texts put there
To cure a great world of its modern sorrow—
Pitiful and gentle as a crust
Eaten by a mongrel from a beggar's hand.—
And always through these things I see to-morrow
Like a still ruffian in an alley stand."

The thought, often harsh and abrupt, moves always to this quiet and mysteriously lovely melody. Sometimes, as in *Lodge and Mansion*, the liquid and serpentine movement of the verse creates a perfect blend of thought, emotion, rhythm: a "sweet completion," fragilely rounded in a grave, serene music. The opening line of *John Delafield* is ten syllables of mysterious incantation. The last verse is one of the most perfect and characteristic in the book. Its surge and halt of rhythm, its serene falling close, its fastidious and surprising choice of words are full of the sensitive awareness of suffering that runs throughout *Quainton Churchyard* and *The Ghost Never Breathed Of*.

> "He knelt and stood and listened to the words
> And held his peace there once with those poor souls.
> But long ago they went into the night,
> The doors are locked, the dark hours cold,
> The kettle sleeps upon the pitiful ring.
> The dear moon crying with a little light
> Looks in the woods of England, dim with Spring.
> O Love of God, be with and shield
> The soul and body of John Delafield."

There is a forlorn note in it, an exquisite pale melancholy, that "gently breaks the heart," as Burne Jones once said of "that blessed word" Mesopotamia.

Reading Mr. Whistler's poetry, one thinks instinctively of the Carolines. And yet he so seldom approaches their management of the colloquial. The crystallization of ordinary speech-measures into memorable verse is perhaps the major achievement of modern poetry. But where ordinary speech-rhythms occur in *The Emperor Heart* they do not move very surely. The last verse of *Fear at the Manor* appears to be a little out of key:

> "Four hundred years of changing Europe,
> And grey lights on a grey house.
> They have not made that changeless question
> Any the easier for us."

Mr. Whistler shares too the Caroline love for intellectual conceits and verbal subtleties; the seventeenth century delighted in such puns as

"Woman, you made us at your pleasure only
That our strong bones may be embraced by yew."

or

"A little army stand
Of heroes never fated for a first—
And for a second, here, it cuffs my idle hand,"

He has an exquisite ear for octosyllabics and a chiselled perfection of phrase that, when one reads the *Four Inscriptions* or *Pan To Syrinx* or *A Bed in Starlight*, recall far off, delightfully, Carew and King and Corbet and that sweet band.

But there is some other spirit here, called from dim melancholy regions beyond Time, like those cloudy shores which are the background of all the verse of Edgar Poe. It is a spirit impossible to analyse: throwing a queer spell over words, so that statements of a charged simplicity have behind and beyond them a crowd of half-realized associations. Perhaps it is his preoccupation with Time, darkest of all dark mysteries: the Ruins that build mansions in Eternity. And you may always judge a true poet more by his approaches to the hackneyed, to Time, Death, Love, than by his elaborate probings into the midnight of his own Subconscious. Mr. Whistler is obsessed by the problem of Time. He is a poet to whom experience has happened and been, "different in dream," rebuilt: with this thread of perplexity and anguish and "restless extasie" running through and through it. This queer, questioning undercurrent recurs like a refrain in these pages, making history not the mere tale of dead men's doings, but a long, mysterious pageant of forgotten suffering, still peopling the world with its ghosts. I find it most explicitly in the lines on *Lumley Castle*:

"Now Vanbrugh made a rose of this dark house,
And they were many centuries dead the night
When he was but a kiss in candle-light.
His noble heart is in time's wolfish maw—
And still they shadow and importune us,
Those fourteen men at church I never saw."

Quainton Churchyard is a lovely reverie on Time, a subtle and curious probing into that dark Backward: hovering, like a moth round some fantastic candle, about the changes of time and the unchanging secrecies of death. Sometimes there is a hint of a kind of envy and anger at the passing of loveliness and the dumb survival of the tombstone and the pebble.

> "This was done
> Many centuries ago: as many beyond to-morrow.
> Time's insignificant. Stones
> Are lasting, they are stronger than bones."

Omnia abeunt in mysterium; only the stones outlast the "bright match in the catacomb," keeping the secret they cannot utter. *Good Friday* again is the elegy of the thing that survives and conquers Time itself defeated and destroyed by the brief passage of humans.

So intimately woven with the texture of these poems is this recurrent rhythm of thought, that they will have small significance to anyone not passionately and desperately alive to the fact that

> "Beauty vanisheth: beauty passeth,
> However rare, rare it be,"

and will mean little to one more concerned with action than with the passionate intricacies of thought. Yet *The Emperor Heart* deals, not unworthily, with problems that haunted Meleager and Marvell and Beddoes, "the crumbling torches of Time and the misty vaporousness of Oblivion," and that will not let to-morrow go unchallenged by their questioning ghosts. These poems will remain as their predecessors have remained, whatever may be said about them and about them: while upon their critics, commenting, carping, applauding, Mnemosyne, Mother of the Muses, takes her sure revenge.

RONALD FULLER.

IN PERSPECTIVE

SEEDS will thrust with valiant shoot,
Stab the earth with greedy root—
Though the noise of man's dissent
Rock the starry firmament.

Buds must quicken, flowers will bloom—
What man's pleasure or his doom ;
Day by day their course must run
Moon and tide and storm and sun.

Spring and mating-season—birth—
Summer riot through the earth,
Autumn's fruit and Winter's chill—
Less concerned than man to kill—

Nothing lags and nought will speed
Howsoe'er we lust or need—
Prince and beggar—what are we,
Matched with all eternity!

Yet for this should we rejoice—
Ceasing from bewildered voice—
Men are born and men shall die—
Still remain this earth and sky.

And the conflict, won or lost—
What the glory or the cost,
When the truth shall march sublime
Down the avenues of time !

MARGUERITE JOHANSEN.

EXILES

I THOUGHT, how lonely are the wise
And how unhappy are the strong !
The stars are islands in the skies
And sun and moon are worlds apart.
The way from world to world is long,
But longer still from heart to heart.

A. M. WALKER.

HENRY VAUGHAN

WALES is still the land of white witches and the evil eye. At least that is what many of her poets would have one believe, admitting of course that those poets are neither inhibited nor repressed by the satirical genius of the wide cosmopolitan industrial areas of the south. But in those ancient valleys where the corn is gathered during the harvest season among the quiet folds of the hills, and where a thousand dream-haunted springs sparkle and glide between banks crowned with lush grass and starred with an abundance of wild flowers, the only enchantments still remain. And

> " Poets like angels where they once appear
> Hallow the place, and each succeeding year
> Adds reverence to it, such as length doth give
> This aged faith that there their genii live."

The mystical inspiration of the Welsh bard and the religious fervours of his themes which culminated in the revivalist hymnal and the puritanical psalmody of the last century, became familiar as early as the twelfth century when the celebrated Geraldus Cambrensis made his itinery through the principality in the train of Archbishop Baldwin.

Whether every Welshman is born a mystic and a mute, inglorious poet is a debatable point, especially considering the practical method of existence he so easily adopts, and his effortless attainment to mundane pre-eminence. On the other hand, it would be idle to deny that those Welsh poets who have distinguished themselves in their art, whether they be direct inheritors of their race's noble literary instinct or not, are influenced to no little extent by an uninterrupted chain of emotional experience transmitted through the medium of a literary thought which has for its ideal an almost iconoclastic conception of the Godhead and the mysteries which proceed from it and from the ancient secrets of its worship.

Few Welsh poets are known to English literature. That may be explained by the fact that there exists an uncompromising national pride which glories in its own culture and its own language, and which has superimposed the penalty of silence on all but its own familiar accents. But those poets who have written in English, and even those poets who are not Welshmen but who have lived in Wales and who have come in close contact with an intimate national environment, have borrowed something from the monotheistic sublimity of the bard and from the beauty of holiness which burns a white unquenchable flame in the high tabernacle of his mountains.

And so the poetry of Henry Vaughan is lifted on to this same exalted spiritual plane, becoming eternally preserved from the invasion of a murky world and the blight and blemish of its disruption.

At the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, south-east Wales and most of that part of the country which is now known as Breconshire, was inhabited by a warlike tribe called the Silures, and it is because Henry Vaughan was born a native of that county that he is sometimes called the Silurist. His birthplace, Newton, lay on the shores of the river Usk, a historic stream meandering through tranquil regions of meadowland, which spread themselves towards the feet of the great hills which marked the horizon. His childhood, sheltered even as those peaceful valleys were sheltered, remained under the enchantments of that land of a thousand legends. It saw the sun rise and the moon rise above the lofty peaks of the hills, the silver flood of the river with its flocks of swans rising and dipping like imperial galleys in full sail. The seasons of blossom and harvests and the time of the year when the land lay fallow under the lowering rain clouds, but all those seasons were beautiful, and as the child grew to manhood and joined in the immemorial worship of his ancestors in the little weather-beaten grey stone church surrounded by its charmed circle of yew trees, the simple ardours of his faith increased and God, always ever-present to the countryman, became very near.

He had for his first tutor a reputable school-master from his own county, and he remained under his instruction for about six years until, having attained his seventeenth year, he entered Jesus College, Oxford, in the Michaelmas term of 1638. While at college he seems to have made a special study of logic and economic law, as his father was anxious that some municipal appointment in London might be found for him. But the Civil War broke out with devastating suddenness. He was sent home. By this time he had devoted a great deal of his energy to the study of poetry and philology and he had already written a collection of odes entitled " Eucharistia Oxoniensis," which contained, as Canon Beeching remarked, at least one good couplet included as a graceful compliment to the reigning monarch Charles the First,

> " The same kind of virtue doth at once disclose
> The beauty of their thistle and our rose."

And the same authority insists that, like most Welshmen of that time, Vaughan would have been an ardent Royalist. Strangely enough, however, after his return home it is not for his literary achievements that Vaughan became famous among his countrymen, but because, as Anthony à Wood describes it, " afterwards applying his mind to the study of physic, he became at length eminent in his own county for the practice thereof, and was esteemed by scholars as an ingenious person."

So much for the man ; now for the poems. Five years after the publication of *Eucharistica Oxoniensis*, a volume of his collected verse made its appearance, entitled, *Poems with the tenth Satire of Juvenal englished by Henry Vaughan Gentleman.* There were thirteen original poems included in this book, mostly addressed to Amoret, who was thought by many critics to have been his first wife. (He was married twice.) The poems curiously insubstantial, half indealistic as they are, might be considered mere experiments in love verses. The second volume of secular verse was soon condemned to oblivion by the author himself. " The author had long ago condemned these poems to obscuritie. This censure gave them the gust of death, and they have partly known that oblivion which our best labours must come to at the last."

But it is in the religious poems which made their appearance in 1651 and 1655, that the perfection of Vaughan's artistic genius lies, and here that question first intrudes itself as to what extent Vaughan has been influenced by his predecessor, George Herbert. Vaughan himself perhaps can best answer that question. He is speaking of the depraved and licentious literature of his time. "The first that with any effectual success attempted a diversion of this foul and overflowing stream was the blessed man Mr. George Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious converts of whom I am the least."

According to Archbishop Trench, "as a divine, Vaughan may be inferior, but as a poet he is certainly superior to Herbert." But this is denied by George Macdonald. His opinion is that Vaughan's art is not comparable to that of Herbert, hence Herbert always remains the master. But as Vaughan himself was no controversialist and openly acknowledges the debt of what he owed to other men of recognized genius, being prepared rather to admire the heroic feats of his cavalier friends upon the field of battle than to gird on the sword himself, perhaps it would be wiser in dismissing this unwise comparison of the separate genius of two separate poets, to quote the words of still another critic, "Vaughan was a mystic. Herbert was an ascetic."

And to conclude with Canon Beeching's admirable insight into the profound spiritual genius of the poet who remained as isolated and as loftily remote as Moses was on Mount Sinai from the Promised Land of his age and the deceptive glitter of its mirage, "It is easy to see that he has a passion for nature for her own sake, that he has observed her moods, that indeed the world to him is no less than a veil of the Eternal Spirit whose presence may be felt in any, even the smallest part."

Vaughan died in the year 1695, towards the end of April, and was buried in the Parish Church of Llansenfreid in Breconshire. During the whole of his lifetime, he had not wished to wander far from the country of his beloved river Usk, and so he was laid to rest near those waters over which his spirit had brooded so long, and with the insatiable yearnings of a hungry faith.

THEODORE NICHOLL.

KNOCKMOYLE

A STRANGER I have been, and far away
Through many a grievous night and weary day,
But now, at last, my hastening feet have come
From unloved places—Home.

Now have I leaned my breast
Against the mountain wind,
And pressed
Up the steep mountain road,
Knowing that at the summit I shall find
The beautiful abode
Of God—
His Presence fills
The quiet of the everlasting hills.

I shall stretch out my arms,
Shall stretch them wide
To greet Knockmoyle, who rears his rugged head,
Beloved mountain ! on the further side
Of the far-sweeping valley, diamonded
With little fields, and little home-like farms,
In sunlight welcoming.
To brave Knockmoyle I shall stretch out my arms,
My heart shall sing.

The mountains stand, a stately company,
Close-linked and calm ; but an Adventurer he !
Knockmoyle, the bold lad ! pushes out before
The Monarch of them all, proud Galteemore !

For when these mountains into being came
With shock on shock
Of heaving earth and shattering, sliding rock,
With crash on crash,
And the red, blinding flash
Of lightning's vivid flame,
In that primeval day
He leaped aside, and shouting broke away
From the convulsive line in furious disarray.

Resting at length
His undiminished strength
Far down below, where still he holds his own,
Conspicuous and alone.
He leaves the mist-wreaths to the hills behind
And rises, gay and kind,
Wearing a Puckish cap upon his crest!
And, pheasant-like, upon his sloping breast
Soft green and gold with heather-purples blend.
On him the changing moods of day and night
With all delight
And liberty descend;
The keen insurgent air
Down-sweeping from the height,
Wafts courage, hope, and promise everywhere.

Here is the beautiful abode
Of God—
His Presence fills
The vigour of the everlasting hills.

So, with my song, to journey's end I come,
With hastening feet, from unloved places—Home!
MARGARET E. STRINGER.

ELEANORA

WHEN Beauty passes . . .
The stooping heaven
Fringes the world's rim
With wonders seven:
Grace, light and calm-eyed faith
All storms enduring,
Hope, joy, and that rare peace
With power ensuring
God's presence from above:
When Beauty passes. . . .
Passes my Love.
A. F. MEADOWS.

DORSET, SEPTEMBER

IT is a land of cottages,
Of clematis clung cottages,
Of lozenge latticed cottages
With giant sunflowers lazing by the door,
Whose heavy heads drop gold dust on the floor.

Bubble spangled, rush entangled
Streams slip past the village gardens,
With their slumberous yellow hives
Past the dark orchards dim lit avenues,
Past the old mill, long-shuttered and recluse.

A land of pleasant pasturage,
Sloping seven acre meadows
Slit into a thousand patterns
By the bluff ballet of the hedgerows gay ;
Bramble beribboned, wandering away.

Some fields now are mustard mottled
Some now bleed with blood of poppies.
A quarry falls, a solid sheet,
Backcloth to the silent pines. A water wheel
Whines in the wind, a skeleton in steel.

The church stands solitary, alone
In commune with the graves, that peep
Still lifewards from the muffling turf :
Father and son, shepherds, sowers, reapers—
Father and son, ploughmen, poachers, keepers.

A spider web of lanes, the vale
Is traversed by these idle veins
With no beginnings and no end ;
But witless rambling, hesitating, turning,
To see a new thatched rick, a bonfire burning.

Beyond that gate a flight of birds
Hold council in a clash of tongues,
Against their common enemy,

The scarecrow, satanic sentry of the shire,
Top hatted, tumble down, knee deep in the mire.

Unpeopled are the woods to-day,
Untrampled paths, dew bladed grass,
Empty the beechen caverns, bare
The crescent clearance, like a stage for dancing
Only the leaves' reflections slowly, coldly glancing.

The ramparts of the hills rise up
To those far heights, where earth and sky
Have their eternal armistice.
Over the hills there cometh secretly
The far-off calling of the sea, the sea.

A. D. BIRCH.

BREAK OPEN THE ROCKS

BREAK open the rocks;
find the seed within.
The broken rock shall flower
The eye shall claim an hour
for looking on the flower.

Then make the green turf die
root out the blossom;
lie down in the cold sand
in the cold sand's bosom.
Whiten the skull
with movements of the worm,
and you will find the seeded bone
has later flowered from the tomb.

In vain the cold ground
will seek to hide the wound:
the level eye
looks up to face alone
the working-out of silence,
the showing of the bone.

PETER URE.

SOME GERMAN POST-WAR LYRIC POETS

THE close of the war revealed German literature very plainly divided into two main channels—those who ignored or deliberately held themselves apart from the spirit of the time, and those who were born of it or at least part of it and so in some measure reflected it. The first class nearly all belong to the school of Stefan George, a singular, aloof, austere poet whom the Germans regard with reverence amounting to awe and who commanded a whole band of devoted and enthusiastic followers. At the other extreme we have the workmen poets, whose preoccupation with the problems of current existence made them at times chaotic with unbalanced fervour.

The release of art ran parallel, as it so often does, to the political release of 1918. The return of civilization found a defeated and impoverished Germany in possession of a political freedom for which it was not altogether prepared. A group of young poets shot up out of the ground—literally, for they came from the trenches—and found a receptive public. Semi-starvation is always supposed to stimulate the imagination,—and of this they had had enough.

There was a leaping-up of art in every form. This was furthered by the Republican government which rejoiced to see these young men finding an outlet which neither embarrassed nor hindered the progress of civil rule. So the experiment soared and spread in art, in the theatre, in literature. It produced the strangest excrescences,—the pictures in which bits of newspaper and spent matches formed part of the design and the poetry of Dadaism—which resembled, not only phonetically, the lallings of the very young.

Of course, this period of preliminary frothing soon passed—because, the censorship being lifted, it did not receive the artificial stimulus of suppression,—and the real wine settled down and matured. The opportunities offered to the young were eagerly accepted; and the many new magazines which sprang up in this fevered and fertile soil contained much that was of real merit. But Germany was not permitted to develop in peace, either internally or externally. There were but two paths left to her poets,—to express themselves in terms of the struggle, to merge the poet and the politician—always a dangerous experiment—and usually fatal. Or to stand deliberately aloof from it all, to hedge oneself around with a wall of silence, to live in a private Parnassus with only the muses and kindred souls for company. And this is what others did, and thus endured, even if their souls became a little arid and detached as a result.

Strange is such a development as that of Arno Holz. All through his youth he had been one of the most ardent of the social poets—and this in the days of the old régime, when such an attitude was by no means free from danger. He was one of the founders of the German naturalist movement,—long before Hauptmann and his "Weavers." But he never achieved Gerhart Hauptmann's popularity, and his later work tended to develop ever further from the dramatic, becoming more satirical and more epic. His *Dafnis Lieder* are very famous in German, though practically untranslatable. They are an amazingly successful attempt to capture the spirit of a largely imaginary eighteenth-century tradition of bucolic lyric, very gallant, very Watteau-Fragonard in spirit, and enlivened by an extraordinarily freakish spelling, unlike the freakishness of genuine eighteenth-century curiosities of orthography, but full of charm. Holz then began to develop a strange mathematical theory of poetry which completely obsessed all his later or post-war work, producing structures undoubtedly rhythmical but obeying laws so obscure that an abstruse mathematical formula would need to be provided to explain the why and wherefore of the rhyme-scheme of each poem. His great poem *Phantasus*, on which he worked persistently without ever arriving at a final version which satisfied his own ideal, impressed his fellow-authors so highly, however, that they put him up as Germany's candidate for the Nobel literature prize in one of the early post-war years.

In *To Myself* we have Holz in the purely lyrical mood of his earlier years :

Let the roses strew their scent
  To blackbirds and to finches,
You shall thirst to drink the dew
  That the eagles' drink is.

Blood is blood only when it beats,
  Happiness can be anchored,
Heaven's blue and sunlight's gold
  Can't be corked in a tankard.

Here is the combative social poet : *The People to Its Princes* :

Once before to victory I helped you,
  Wars of Liberation—who remembers ?
Now once more you bid me pluck you chestnuts,
  Nicely roasted from the glowing embers.

Once before, over head and ears in debt,
Your thanks, I was assured, you'd not forget.
You smiled, dismissed me : when I turned to go
Behind my back you struck the coward's blow.

Believe me, lords, who loves can also hate,
  Your sun will one day turn to clouds and rain,
To-day, to bleed to death may be my fate,
  But at Philippi we shall meet again.

No mention of Holz is complete without his great satiric-comic-lyrical-dramatic poem, *The Tinsmithy*—the laughing synthesis. Herman George Scheffauer summed it up in his *New Vision in the German Arts*.

'"The Laughing Synthesis'—that is, perhaps, the inmost secret of this wild bedlam of a book and the mysticism that partly enwraps it. It is Arno Holz' attempt to compose a Profane Comedy, to reduce all culture, all history, all art and all human society to something that may be brightened and interpreted by the Comic Spirit. A modern Thyrsites in the Temple. History and Mythology deprived of robe, mask and *Kothurnus* and reduced to the pitifully human, sometimes to the bestial, the gods made laughable in the toils of the passion with which they have befuddled men, heroes subject to the animalism that whips the earth like a top. A panorama, a peep-show, a circus—a stage on which are focussed pitiless, wise and sardonic eyes, the eyes of the disillusioned Holz himself—a kind of lyrical Professor Teufelsdröckh. Into the satiric-scurrilous, the sarcastic-salacious, the exclamatory-invective, the riotous indecency of this or that stave, creeps the low, groaning note of this disillusion at the heart of the poet. Not even the exuberance that overcrowds the work, not the intolerable torrential rush of the language, the league-long drawing-out of linked agonies of speech, the bleated amorphisms of incessant refrain and repetition, can dim or tire the blazing, coruscating prose and verse which dazzle the brain as a pile of unset gems the eyes. The lavish learning shown—this, too, is Rabelaisian—there are mountains of allusion, as in Montaigne or Sir Thomas Browne.

"No echo of the war rings plangently from *The Tinsmithy;* no shot is heard, no streak of poison gas crawls across the scene. Some day this world convulsion may be compressed into a number of scornful quatrains. *The Tinsmithy* is for the greater part untranslatable, a grandiose monstrosity in literature that requires for its full comprehension a soul and a mind drenched in the spirit of the Gothic and shot through with the golden threads of the Pagan world. And the spectator who sits down to this gallimaufry of a feast must also be annealed in the crystal furnaces of the Renaissance. He must also be an ultimate Modern and have swallowed and digested the greater part of the things called Culture and Civilization, and then given them up again in disgust—as one who grows seasick from the pitching deck and the swinging stars. Such meat and wine are too strong for our own literature, but this Gargantuan *magnum opus* stands and sparkles, a cosmic-lyrical boiler factory, the tinny thunder of which is softened by a Loreley-like music that rings above the pother."

A war-born genius whose name has grown familiar to many of us is Ernst Toller, whose beautiful and tender *Book of Swallows* also exists in an English version. What a sensation was his poetic play *Transformation*, pleading peace and the insanity of war to a world only just released from war mania and police censorship! The moving work begins thus:

Shatter the cup of glittering pale crystal
From which the wonders, dewy-pearled, are falling,
Like petal-dust from dusky crimson tulips.
We strode through all the twilight world of wonder,
Dreaming, we plucked the legends with soft hands;
From sunbeams, Faith raised to itself cathedrals,
From the high towers fell down a rain of roses.

Then murdering, evil creatures creeping
Spattered flames upon the earth!

Typical product of the yeasty post-war literature was the school of the "Storm"—an ultra-modern or expressionistic movement in art and literature, led by Herwarth

Walden. Johannes Becher, a chaotic prophet, is their greatest lyrist; he began musically with such poems as *The Children's Crusade*:

Loud sang they down the pathway of the mountains,
A shining flock of many little lambs:
"We have been wakened by the silver voices
Of many birds slain on the nightly meads."

Thin like white flags streamed from their limbs the garments:
They bound a cross out of the stalks of flowers,
Before them psalmed the bells out of the hamlets:
"O that Jerusalem illume the valley!"

"Wolves will devour you in the ancient forests!"
"Nay, us the evil beasts would never harm,
The snow-white Saviour will forever shield us!"

Storm at the Cape shattered the holy ship—
Now giant sharks swing eyes of fire above them—
Eternal lamps that sway above their graves. . . .

But, in the words of the *New Vision*:

". . . he came striding forth with an iron harp out of the cataclysmic welter of the war, its draff foul upon him, naked of all illusions, wounded within and without, shaken.

"Reversed, rebellious, feeling himself flame- and blood-anointed to be the protagonist of Man the Martyr, he went staggering across the desolation of Europe with flickering eyes fanatically bent upon the goal of reconciliation, upon the reconstruction of a world-soul that was to purge a leprous planet, dwell in it and make it luminous as never before."

But he had become incoherent: "The words become mere stepping-stones in the rushing torrents of his emotion:"

Arm-sickles sweep gulch-roadways high!
Head-thistle hiss cloud-sponges. Moon: hole—
How man sways man: Ha! shoreless, ha!
Woman through light turns a dishevelled lap,
Screams cries man! Man! That drumming thunder weaves.

Other Storm poets brewed his expressionistic word-soup without the underlying genius. This is Kurt Liebmann:

Thy hair fluffs smiles
Breath velvet
Thou
kissest at longings silver-threads

claw-stark plaint
to waving light
and
curling
circling
bluest
sigh.

Rudolf Blümner, reciter and protagonist of *Sturm* poets, then reduced the chaos *ad absurdum* by composing the Absolute Poem,—sheer sound without sense—music alone. Here are the first five lines :

Oiai laéla oia ssisialu
Ensudio trésa sudio mischnumi
Ia lon stuaz
Brorr schjatt
Oiazo tsuigulu—

Read by Blümner himself, the thing had a hypnotic effectiveness. And yet, as the *New Vision* comments : " Sense is the body of poetry, and we do not wish to disembody it into mere sound, any more than we wish to disembody the flower into mere perfume."

Here is a pleasant change :

When Johann Sebastian Bach was dead,
In Saint Thomas before the altar he was laid.
Still, those creative hands that had loved to play with sound,
In the twilight chancel, with the shadows all around,
One by one the candles sank down and gave no light,
And the dead Bach lay alone in the church's night.

Dong !
Sounds the vault along,
A muffled running call
Rang along the wall.
Did someone press the pedal or pull the stops ?
It was like a whispered call when a signal throbs.

And softly, gently, the walls of the building drone,
The pipes came from the organ with whistle and groan.
The wooden pipes,
The pewter pipes,
The big pipes heavy and thick like lusty churls,
The delicate pipes, graceful as girls,
Pipes, bold as boys, pipes like children sweet,
In a long train

Came down the steps to the altar, to his feet,
The folk of the pipes, with child and grandchild amain.
They gathered about the coffin, two by two,
Over the brasses where heroes lie,
The great dark bourdons blew,
The others murmured a litany.
In a row across the nave from wall to wall,
Round the bier they stood, from short to tall—
Till night was fled
The organ pipes kept watch, when Bach was dead.

No one would guess that the author of this tender little poem is Ernst Lissauer, the man who became notorious for the *Song of Hate*, which provided so much comic relief for us in the early war days. Poor Lissauer, who effectually killed his own reputation for a long time by that bit of hysteria, is really a good lyric poet.

It is curious that Franz Werfel, whom we think of here purely as a novelist, author of *Verdi* and other works, was at this time known only as a poet and a very distinguished one. Critics even spoke of him as the greatest German living lyric poet. Naturally, like every German poet of any account, he had to write his " Faust " ; that is to say, an autobiographical poem describing the fall and re-arising of the hero from moral, intellectual or spiritual depths. Werfel's Faust-poem is called *Spiegel-Mensch* or the Mirror Man. And in spite of certain roughnesses, it certainly has greatness. Werfel followed this with the strangely primitive, wildly poetic drama, *Bocksgesang* (The Song of the Ram)—and then he turned to the novel and was more or less lost to poetry. His ballad *Jesus and the River of Corruption* is a tremendously thrilling piece of work, both in its command of language and in its power, so singularly possible only to high poetry, to move the heart with beauty even as it repels with horror. It is too long to quote, but this lyric of his middle period, *Forgotten*, will give some idea of Werfel's poetic style :

By this river's doings watching,
Resting, floating over
To the island, to the northern urge of the reeds—
I have forgotten you—
I forgot your face,

The decline of your features
Into the poor, hard, open hands.
I have forgotten your twilight sorrow this evening.
Low-flying gulls speed over whirlpools,
Grass rustles in the night.
Woe! Sin is in my face!

The aloof school of poets is all more or less derived from Stefan George, in whom they all adore their master. George, inspired by French models, worshipped form, but his disciples took many and various paths away from him. One of the finest and purest lyric poets Germany ever produced comes of his clan: this is Rainer Maria Rilke. He wrote before, during and after the war as apart and cloistered as though no such world-stirring phenomenon had ever existed for him. Spiritually, no doubt, it did not exist. A man so German and yet so French in his literary soul, must needs raise a barrier between himself and the crude barbarities of the world-horror, or be crushed under Juggernaut's wheels. The simplest of his limpid lyrics is imbued with deep meaning: *Solemn Hour*:

Whoever weeps somewhere in the world,
Without reason weeps in the world,
Weeps over me.

Whoever laughs somewhere in the world,
Without reason laughs in the world,
Laughs at me.

Whoever walks somewhere in the world,
Without reason walks in the world,
Walks to me.

Whoever dies somewhere in the world,
Without reason dies in the world,
Looks at me.

THE PANTHER

His glance, from endless passing of the bars
Has grown so weary that it nought retains,
There seem to him a thousand weary, dreary
Bars, and behind them no more world remains.

Elastic passage of strong, graceful steps
In smallest of all circles now confined,

Is like a dance of strength about a point,
Where a great will's enclosed, struck dumb and blind.

But sometimes lifts the curtain of those pupils,
Soundlessly lifts ; a picture then will rise,
It goes through that tense stillness of the limbs
And in the heart it sinks and dies.

To this older generation belongs Richard Dehmel, famous above all for his love lyrics—" The darkling Thou, the darkling I, that seek each other through the night—and find——" It is impossible to leave him out, for his name, coupled with the Austrian Hoffmannsthal, is inseparable from the idea of modern German lyric poetry. He also wrote a good deal of social-minded verse. This *Harvest Song* is a good—and famous—example :

There stands a gold field full of corn
Across the world from dusk to morn,
Grind, mill, grind.

In all the land the wind is still,
On the sky's edge is many a mill,
Grind, mill, grind.

Dark sunset falls on many a head
Of many folk that cry for bread,
Grind, mill, grind.

The night holds tempests in its train,
To-morrow toil begins again,
Grind, mill, grind.

The storm sweeps clean the fields for corn,
No man for bread shall cry forlorn,
Grind, mill, grind.

Another poetically-minded author who is known to us, if at all, as a prose writer, is Waldemar Bonsels. The only book of his which has become universally known is *Maya the Bee*. As an example of the effect of the war years in general upon the German author, it is interesting to take a little lyric which appeared in *Maya*—the Elf Song—and compare the two versions. In the pre-war version it read thus :

Light, that is my golden home,
  Joy to me are skies aflame,
Death and life may go and come
  But my soul remains the same.

Soul of mine, it is the breath
  That from beauty's self doth rise,
As from God in Paradise
  And from all his earth beneath.

But in a later collection of post-war nature fairy-stories, he used the same poem with a new second verse:

Sorrow, thou my earthly fate,
  Over all thy gifts so bitter,
I would have my soul grow great,
  Strong, and as with light to glitter.

This change seems very significant.

The workmen-poets form a large contingent and account for a great deal of very excellent work. An interesting group, largely artisans, some iron-workers, centred in the literary and artistic colony to which Jacob Kneip, the author of so many poetic legends, Joseph Winckler, Heinrich Lersch, Gerrit Engelcke and others belonged. They gave out a magazine of their own, called *Nyland*—started just before the war. That they went on through it and survived it—spiritually, that is, for too many did not survive physically—shows their inner strength. This strong little war poem, *Brothers*, is by Heinrich Lersch:

Long enough a dead man by our barbed wire had lain,
The sun glowed down upon him, cool wind and dewy rain.
Every day I could see him, looking into his face,
And every day I saw my brother in his place.
So like in every hour, before us as he lay,
I heard his very voice, in joyous peacetime play.
Often at night a weeping, wakening me from sleep—
" Brother of mine, my brother, has your love grown less deep?"
Till I, in spite of bullets, must creep out to his side
To fetch him in and bury him, a stranger who had died.
My eyes, they had deceived me—but my heart tells no lies,
For every dead man looks at us with our own brother's eyes.

This group was largely Catholic in feeling and religion. Ina Seidel, one of the best woman poets, also belongs to literary Catholicism; she has a tender ballad, *Brother Death*, on a similar theme, beginning thus:

When my mother gave me birth,
Then he too was born,
They cut our curls the self-same day,
Often our suits were torn,
I in Prussia, he in France,
Or in England or in Russia—
Him I never yet did see:
When I once set eyes upon him
Then 'twill be the end of me.
He was such a boisterous fellow,
Just like me, a wilful boy,
Climbed and stole the farmer's apples,
Raced his dog for very joy.
I was hungry, he was hungry,
What an appetite we had!
And my mother and his mother,
Scolded, loved us in one breath,
I in Prussia, he in England,
And that was my Brother Death. . . .

A very different woman poet, consumed by inner fire and carrying one away by the force and brilliance of her pictures and the fervour of her emotion, is the Jewess Else Lasker-Schüler, whose Hebrew Ballads are famous. In a way, she is a true feminine Heine. Here is a simple love-lyric:

A delicate rustle of silk
  Through our slumbers blew,
Like the pulse of bursting blossom
  Over us two.

And homewards I am carried
  On your breath borne,
Through magical fairy stories
  And legends forlorn.

And my thorny smile is playing
  In your age-deep eye
And the worlds are coming
  At our side to lie.

A delicate rustle of silk
  Through our slumbers blew,
Dreams, old as the world,
  Bless us two.

Then there is Paul Zech, with his beautiful poems of forests, and Oskar Loerke, with his *Mountains* :

Shadows are growing longer,
The silent apes of things—
Climbing, fleeing the stronger,
Grass flees the brook, the foot its slings.
The tooth of the whirlpool chatters,
The wind rides high, his silver harness clatters.
See, how the streaming water
Conquers the rocks in the end :
The wave, though it roll and bend
Lives on in the stone it flattened.
Let thy soul be removed
Into the streaming water.

Among the lonely ones, we should not omit Rudolf Borchardt, calmly continuing to make austerely beautiful new renderings of the classics.

Two dramatists are also lyric poets—Rudolf Leonhard and Walter Hasenclever. Hasenclever made a sensational beginning in 1918 with his rather expressionistic drama, *The Son*, treating of the conflict of the generations ; but later plays did not fulfil the early promise and his name is no longer heard ; this is a dramatic lyric, *Jaures' Death* :

His features pure in their white clarity
Left in the path of error a clear spoor,
They murdered him, spirit of verity,
The comfort of the Paris poor.

The bullet struck him prophesying damnation
And of what should be, warning his doomed land,
The man who would have peace for every nation
Fell victim to a brother's hand.

God took him from the world in evil hour,
Lest he should see despair and all the pain.
His goodly vision helped the right to power,
He is still near, shall for us rise again.

Leonhard's *Prana* has a strange beauty and the quality of a sonnet without its form.

You must breathe deep. The air is good,
A wind of evening is blowing free

Clutching shadows are over the sea,
To thyself have hardihood.

Know, thine own blood belongs to thee,
Thy broad brow stands over the main,
Trust, as thou would'st the tides of the sea,
The tide in thine own brain.

Breathe deep. Thou too art good.

There were a number of excellent satirical verse-writers, among whom Alfred Kerr, famous as a keen critic with a remarkably original style, takes a high place. But I should not be surprised if Kerr were finally remembered best by an exquisite German rendering of Christina Rossetti's *When I am Dead*, *My Dearest*. How strange that a critic of such incisive and scintillating brilliance, a man of Whistlerian malice and Shavian quippishness, should enter so intuitively into the soul of this tenderest and most feminine of love-lyrics !

One of the most provocative, even if uneven talents among satirical poets is Bert Brecht, best known for that remarkable achievement, *Die Dreigroschen Oper*—" The Three-ha'penny Opera." This is none other than our old friend, *The Beggar's Opera*, but Brecht has made an entirely new work on the old theme, different in spirit and in letter, as this bitter little lyric from it will serve to show :

Man lives by his head,
   His head does not suffice,
Try it yourself, for on your head
   Nothing can live but—mice.

For this life, believe it,
   Man is never sly enough,
Nor sees himself deceivèd,
   Filled up with lies and stuff.

Yes, make yourselves a plan
   And be a leading light,
Then make yourself a second plan,
   Neither will go aright.

For this life, believe it,
   Man is never bad enough,

The way he tries to weave it
Shows he's not so rough.

Run after happiness,
But do not run too fast,
For all run after happiness,
It runs after you at last.

For this life, believe me,
Man is a much too hopeful soul,
Therefore all his striving
Leads him to no goal.

Sung to the minor key of Kurt Weill's remarkable music, this song makes an indelible impression. Here is a fragment from Brecht's poem celebrating Lindbergh's Atlantic flight:

Lindbergh: Seven men built my craft in San Diego
Often 24 hours without a pause
Out of a couple of yards of steel tubes.
What they have made, must do for me.
They did the work, and I
Go on working. I am not alone, there are
Eight of us, flying here.

The Fog: Now you are 25 years old and
Fear very little, but when you
Are 25 years and a night old, and a day
You will be more afraid.
To-morrow and to-morrow and a 1000 years
There will be water here and
Air and fog
But you there will
Not be. . . .

We approach the region of the ballad. German authors conversant with languages usually wax enthusiastic about the old English and Scottish ballads. They have nothing contemporary to compare with them; but they have created some very fine ones in later days as well as making astonishingly good translations of ours—particularly those by Leo Sternberg. The best modern ballad poet of Germany is Börries, Freiherr von Munchhausen, who is an actual descendant of that patron saint of hunters and anglers, Baron von Munchhausen. Börries von Munchhausen is one of the poets who went quietly along his own path of poetry, undisturbed by war or peace, though I suppose a number of his later pieces were actually composed under fire. He has a subtle and moving pen, in spite of all his simplicity; he is in the direct line of literary descent from Heine; for he is not lacking in humour as well as power. Here is a little cameo, *Dunkeler Falter*:

When a wedded pair looks up, the midnight stars to find,
Or a brother holds wool for a dear sister to wind,
Or a friend pours wine into his best friend's glass—
Always a dark butterfly over the two will pass.

One of us two behind the coffin must go,
Whereon the long ribbons in the street breezes blow,
One of us must scatter out of a chilly hand
On the edge of the grave a handful of earth and sand.
One of us must turn and go back home alone—
Dear God, let me be the other under the stone!

My own favourite among all the poets who came to the fore after the war is Klabund, a German Keats, who produced an astonishing quantity of splendid work in prose and verse—and, like his English prototype, died young of consumption in a foreign land. He was a romantic figure, full of humour, sweetness, bitterness, lyric and dramatic power, scurrile mockery and tenderness. Two of his romantic novels, *Peter the Czar* and *Brackie the Fool*, have been done into English. He wrote a very beautiful play, ostensibly from the old Chinese *Die Kreidekreis* (The Circle of Chalk), in which Elisabeth Bergner, as Hai-tang, an exquisite figure of Chinese mourning in white, with her small, but vibrant and tremendously appealing voice, made one of her earliest and greatest successes. This little lyric, *When She Was Still Asleep at Noon*, was written to her:

To be sure, it's twelve at noon,
Sun is riding high,
Street is shouting its noisy tune,
Hearts are full and sigh.
Many a sail the wind swells wild
Many a ship the harbours keep,
You shall sleep, you shall sleep, you shall sleep, dear child.

Seventy times you bore Hai-tang,
Fifty times as Joan you died,
Tasted sweetness, tasted pride,
When the torture swelled and sprang.
Sweet young blood, so wild,
Kisses, daggers, tears to weep,
You shall sleep, you shall sleep, you shall sleep, dear child.

Sometime all the play will end,
Sometime all the cruel pain,
And eternity will lend
Coolness to the fevered brain,
Sand like wool soft o'er you piled,
Shepherd piping to his sheep,
You shall sleep, you shall sleep, you shall sleep, dear child.

Kukuli was written to his beautiful actress-wife, Carola Neher.

Little bird called Kukuli
Flee the icy northland, flee.
To India, to Egypt's land,
Over grave and crypt and sand.
Over land and over sea,
Weary earth far under thee.
Little bird, fly fast and true,
Gliding in the heavenly blue,
Fly between the moon and stars
To the very heaven's bars,
To the sun throne, far away,
To the flaming god of day.
God of sorrows, heart's desire,
Fall and perish in his fire.

Another song of beautiful simplicity is *Eternal Easter* :

When they bound God with a chain
On the cross they did him lay
Yet is he on the third day
Risen again.

Fields dry up, fog sets them teeming,
Though the winter's hard and cold,
Sometime all the blossom's gold
Will be gleaming.

Europe did the war dissever,
Vultures Germany devour,
But the sacred veil of Freia
Waves for ever.

Life and love and Spring and Song!
Let the old earth perish,
We'll find all we cherish
Somewhere else the stars among.

Something of an universal genius, Klabund also wrote a remarkably brilliant *German Literature in an Hour*, a survey as comprehensive as his judgments are incisive and concise. He concluded it with a valediction which might be a fitting conclusion to this little survey:

You sages, wardens of the good and true,
Let not war drown the immortal voice of you.
Let not our blood in dreadful red congeal:
Cathedrals be, eternal and ideal.
Thou, Günther, bear of words, with bite and bark,
Thou, Hölderlin, whose gentle pipes we hark.
Thou, Mörike, dreaming under parsonage limes,
Thou, Eichendorff, with birch-woods in the rhymes,
Thou, Heine, German Jew, brain-spirit striding,
Thou, Conrad Ferdinand, in rhythms gliding.
Thou, Platen, whose undying sonnet swells,
Thou, Nietzsche, German Pole, a chain of bells.
And thou, eternal dawn, sunset eternal,
Thou tower, thou storm, Goethe, thou man supernal.

ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUER.

MR. EDWIN MUIR'S DEFENCE OF ROMANTIC POETRY

Mr. Edwin Muir, addressing St. Andrews University Literary Society on the defence of romantic poetry, said one asked if Wordsworth and Coleridge, Keats and Shelley, needed any defence, and there was, of course, a sense in which they did not need it at all, for they were great poets.

But there was another contemporary sense on which they did, for there had been in the last two decades a strong reaction against romantic poetry in general, a reaction directed in this country by T. S. Eliot. He had pointed out that with the romantic movement and the poetry of the eighteenth century, which led up to it, something dropped out of poetry, and that the poetry of the nineteenth century, for example, was incapable of digesting certain kinds of experience which were digested as a matter of course by the poets of the Elizabethan and the Jacobean age. This was now generally admitted, and the main effort of modern poetry had been to bring again the elements which the romantic poets either ignored or rejected. One of these elements was wit.

"We shall have to admit," said Mr. Muir, "that as compared with

Elizabethan poetry romantic poetry lacks wit, this toughness, this everyday reality. Any general defence of romantic poetry must, therefore, be based on the hypothesis that it is different in kind from classical poetry, and that this difference is one which makes it essential or at least relevant. I shall base my defence on the brief unqualified generalization that the assumption of classical poetry is that life cannot change; and the assumption of romantic poetry that life can change."

After contrasting typical examples of classical poetry with examples of romantic poetry, Mr. Muir said that in defence of romantic poetry they must show how romantic poetry differed from classical, not merely negatively, by lacking certain qualities which classical poetry possessed, but positively, by possessing certain qualities which classical poetry lacked.

"The poet (in romantic verse) will tend to turn from the actual society he sees to other things, to man as a non-social corruption, to nature, and to the future; in short, to the potential. All the great romantic poets did at some period of their lives—Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, even Tennyson; Goethe, Heine, Holderlin, and Nietzsche in Germany.

"In distinguishing the quality of romantic poetry we do not usually take these beliefs I have mentioned into account; yet it seems to me that they are inseparable from it. Classical poetry is the poetry of order; romantic poetry of change. Classical poetry assumes society and limitation; romantic poetry takes very little account of society, and is often hostile to it, directly or indirectly, by prophesying another society, or by escaping from the fetters of society to nature.

"We do not ask wit or a tough reasonableness from Isaiah; and we have no more right to ask it from Blake or Wordsworth. Prophetic literature is just as much a mode of literature as tragedy; it has appeared at certain ages in history, and it will continue to appear when the time for it comes. It is in a definite sense revolutionary, just as tragedy is in a definite sense traditional. The age that gave birth to the romantic movement also produced the French Revolution. A revolution is generally a revolt against things as they are; a prophecy, a vision of things as the imagination wishes them to be. In the actual world these things never come together; but they both spring from the same root. They both come from a quality in man which is as permanent and incapable of suppression as the quality which makes him wish to live in an order and write classical poety. When the time comes for that quality to appear, nothing can stop it; it becomes right; and it must be judged by its own lines."

AN ANSWER TO POET'S DESPONDENCY

(intended to be an answer to some of the poems in the last issue, very good, but very despondent).

POET, till now your eyes have been more keen
Than other eyes have been,
Piercing the purple cloud
And peering through the once impenetrable shroud
To see with what high lights the heavens were endowed :
Your heart withstood
With native fortitude
The rising of the flood and its vast flow,
You saw the nameless water palpitate and grow
And, with faith justified, beheld the painted bow.

Keenly you listened to the stars, and found
Consolatory sound,
You heard the planets' hum
Tuning their songs to time's indomitable drum
In frosted miles of unimaginable sum :
And you rejoice
To hear the still small voice,
Knowing shell thunder, splinter and sealed room,
Gas mask and bomber, whirling fighter and gun boom
Precipitate war's mastery to soundless doom.

And when you saw the world travail in pain,
Anguish in heart and brain,
With bounty of design
You called the ingrate and the publican to dine
And turned their water into flavour of sweet wine,
And shared their feast
As brother and as priest,
So that they blessed their poverty and stress,
Their homelessness, their wayworn shoes and hedgeworn dress
That led them to a Host of a like graciousness.

Three hundred years of suffering—a span—
And Rome was Christian ;
The martyred saints who died—
Meek and derisive poets—flung their flesh aside
In white unblemished aristocracy of pride,
And Nero's torch
With a brief power to scorch
And then with nothing more that it could do,
With backward-searching ray illuminates the view
Of those strong saints who half dark Hades overthrew.

You feared not fire or the wide realms of ice
Or the dread precipice,

Or dungeon in the earth,
Or the cruel galley or the vitiating dearth,
Or poverty of rags or scornful sound of mirth,
Loss was to you
But a short avenue
To gain unmeasured; and advancing death
August outrider of the sweet-returning breath,
And separation,—room, in which love gathereth.

I saw you once within Odysseus' train,
Daring the billows' rain,
And when the seas were wild
And labouring waters with their mastless wrecks defiled,
You sat within the prow a glad and trusting child:
And though strong seas
Threaten our argosies,
Yet you and I will reach the happy isles,
Lavish of corn-field paths and quaint and rustic stiles
And quivering seas below green cliffs that stretch for miles.

I. Sutherland Groom.

THE FUGITIVES

NOW praise the ones who, with a fraction less
Than absolute courage (since the perfect dares
To change life standing), on swift wheel, smooth keel,
Waved to the past's long tyrannies and cares:

Those who, abhorring the tithe-burdened hour,
Hating the chains that money, comforts, birth,
Had sewn for them; the prospect or the fact
Of smothering marriage—ran, for all their worth:

From the white midnights, from the northern land
Of pine and reindeer shook sun-gathering sails
Eager for southern vineyards; hand in hand,
Crossed over, eastward, to the shores of Wales;

Or roamed with bicycle through lanes, and lived
On birdsmeat, berries; or, in desperate flight,
Was found at last at the small country station
By speedier Death—too old, too old for flight,

While, hooked to cup or glass, by rustling fire,
Friends called them fools, preposterous, insane;
The pile of letters mounted in the hall,
And brass-voiced gongs were banged for them in vain.

N. K. Cruickshank.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXVI

THE poetry of Julia Boynton Green is receiving deserved appreciation, both in America and England, from critics and from anthologists. An intellectual and a lover of beauty, her work is distinguished and has been honoured by considerable recognition and is now to be found in *Noonmark* (L. E. Mitchell, Redlands, California).

Mrs. Green, in answer to my query,—why should we write poetry or read poetry—sends the following interesting consideration of the subject:

> " Why should we read poetry? Why should we eat meat, bread, strawberries? For nourishment, juice, sweetness, and ineffable flavours. To satisfy a compelling and almost universal hunger. But this is assuming we take a view of poetry that includes, with the best of the new, the imperishable old. A large part of the modern product bears about as much resemblance to the poetry I am thinking of as does caviar to the dietary indispensables mentioned above; though it may perhaps function, like the Russian ' delicacy,' as appetizer, its rank briny bitterness driving consumers to the real thing.
>
> " These modern verse wranglers in their zeal to avoid the obvious, to discountenance ' faded verbiage ' and all outworn modes of expression, have drained poetry of its indispensable attributes, colour, music, beauty, clarity—all the nameless appeal that lifts the heart and takes the breath—and have left a dry, bleached, flavourless thing of about as much use to our clamouring human needs as sawdust or basswood chips, to employ a pithy term familiar to my Western New York childhood.
>
> " As to ways of helping children to ' discover ' poetry, or to persuade older people to undertake more travelling in the 'realms of gold ' even at the cost of letting the Buick rest now and then, competent teachers and persuaders are few and hard to find. A good place to begin is at the university of the mother's knee. The service is of supreme importance, not only for the purpose of opening at once a world of untold charm and richness but in order to lay up treasures for special times of need. In this connection we would stress the advisability of not only reading poetry but committing it to memory; it is a very practical preparation for the vicissitudes of this mundane existence. All must meet hours of wearisome insomnia, physical pain, anxiety, apprehension, terrible to endure; anything to mitigate such suffering should be hailed with joy and gratitude. In my own case, if I may be pardoned a personal instance, the unfailing resource in such crises is to repeat poems learned, most of them, long ago. Half a dozen of Wordsworth's sonnets, two of Keats's, Blanco White's imperishable ' Night and Death,' T. B. Aldrich's ' Enamoured Architect of Airy Rhyme,' these are some of the items in this precious repertoire of mine,—and of course always

Shakespeare. As you start, say, 'Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room,' little by little the mind is wooed away from its harrowing obsession; the music soothes; the pictures evolved by the memorable lines exert their healing influence; and thus is demonstrated anew the divine function of beauty.

"'Why we should write poetry' is quite another thing. In this commentator's modest opinion there is absolutely no obligation about it. If the congenital urge is not there why try to evoke it and prod a spurious impulse to inferior accomplishment?

"And yet—an ardent wish toward rhythmic expression does go a long way; and if there be leisure and patience to cultivate a latent gift, to study good models, to polish and perfect the product, there is pure joy in the effort and legitimate place for this careful work though there be not a scintilla in it of the divine flame. There is much to be said for frankly minor poetry, which, to be candid, is all that most of us achieve! If it redound to the author's contentment, and to the real pleasure of the not-too-critical portion of the reading public, then two worthy ends have been attained."

Mrs. Green was born in New York State, living until her marriage in South Byron. After a sojourn in London, a year at the Art Student's League in New York and a short time at Wellesley, Mr. and Mrs. Green and their young son went to Redlands, California. Her home is now in Los Angeles.

We give here a beautiful sonnet—"The Swan":

On silver poised, a shape of moulded snow,
Pride's perfect symbol—dignity and grace
Embodied. Through a fragrant dusky place
Arrased by vines, all dreamfully and slow
The great swan floats; and glimmering below
His pearly plumes, etched on the waves, keeps pace
His lovely double. The exquisite brace
Of creatures drift in silence—to and fro.

Play me the piece again. Ah, by the notes
Evoked the picture comes. I glimpse once more
That form of pure enchantment, from the throat's
Consummate curve to where the crystal wake
Wrinkles beyond him on the shining lake.
And—hark! The singing ripples on the shore!

Mrs. Green's lyric "The Old Miracle" is enchanting. We give the first stanza:

The scented snow has drifted from the bough;
It lies in wasting flakes upon the grass.
And now—and now
Summer's swift miracle will come to pass!

Beauty from ashes—colour from the dun
Dull sodden earth—and music from the hush
Of winter. Green on ground and branch and bush.
And sun! And sun!

In *Traveller of Earth* (Dodd, Mead & Co.) Louise Burton Laidlaw's second volume of poems, the promise of her first book, *Wishing on a Comet*, is realized. This poet's work is distinguished by a clear and trained intellect and the insistent love of beauty. Here we find an ardent, gifted writer, more intellectual than emotional but with an endowed and lively imagination, to whom the years are bringing enlarged understanding and an enlarged power of expression.

There are excellent sonnets in this collection, clearly conceived and well-developed in perfect form, as instanced in the first:

A wind has set the air adrift with song
Beating its rhythm on the frozen ground;
The meadow grasses strain—a seething throng
Swaying, hypnotic, to a strumming sound.
With swift-blown pageantry the clouds sweep high—
Great, shifting swaths of moon-enchanted white
Against the canvas of a star-strewn sky
Whose pulsing patterns plunge across the night.
Staccato blasts run palpitating through
The transient swell of bare and bending trees.
My restless being seeks the rhythm too,
As foam resigns its motion to the seas,
Till I seem borne upon the gale and hurled
Through all the reeling chaos of the world.

Qualified voices of the poetry world are lifted in the praise of this poet's talent, and "Returning Conqueror," which follows, is an example of Miss Laidlaw's lyric ability:

A stubborn beat against my breast,
A flourish, and a shivering pain,
Then like a wayward conqueror
Love thunders in again.

He swaggers through my fortressed heart,
That ruthless one few dare defy.
I should have stabbed him at the gate;
Transfixed, I let him by.

Before his steeds dance graceful joys
Flinging soft flowers as they go;
But look what gifts he drags to me—
His captives, doubt and woe!

"Spent" is dramatic and gives in its few lines the pathos of life, marking with tragic emphasis its real value :

Is there nothing to do but wait, wait, wait
And hope with a hopeless despair—
For me and my son in this cold, cold room
Where the walls and the floor are bare ;
And nothing left of what once was home
But this bed and this rocking chair ?

Is there nothing to do but wait, wait, wait
For a penny or two—by luck,
When all the cold, bright gold one could dream,
Piled in a coral truck,
Were not worth the little life of my boy,
And his priceless, patient pluck ?

Is there nothing to do but wait, wait, wait
For some one with wage to share ?
Who is that now ? I hear the beat
Of a halting tread on the stair ;
Is it a friend with food and fuel,
Or Death come to fetch his fare ?

. . . . .

" Death, you must know that my son can't pay
So why are you standing there ! "

Miss Laidlaw sends us the following paragraphs on poetry :

" So often I am asked ' What do you like to write about ? ' The casual answer is, ' Oh, a little of everything,—love, nature, science, peace, humanity.'

" The real answer, however, goes much deeper than that. I feel that *anything* in the wide *universe* may be taken as a subject for poetry, and the choice and treatment depends on the breadth of the poet's knowledge, the depth of his emotion, and the clearness of his vision. Of this triumverate, perhaps the most essential is emotion. It is the burning glass that gathers the diverse rays of our experiences and focuses them to a glowing point of lyricism. The poet must also respond keenly to his sensations ; he must be capable of describing objects which others pass unheeded and he must have the imagination to discover reactions which others could never dream. The third criterion, knowledge, may either be the poet's crowning glory, or his downfall.

" The didactic poet is out of fashion, and indeed he has no more kinship with the muse than the flatly descriptive writer. Yet surely all poetry cannot be purely subjective and intuitive. The great poet must be so steeped in the culture of the past, and so gripped with the problems of the present, that they become amalgamated as an integral part of his emotional setup. In order to reach this state the poet's wisdom must encompass all knowledge and his heart be as broad as humanity. It is toward this

> ineffable synthesis of the mind and the emotions that I am striving."

From the College of Letters of the University of Michigan, Professor J. William Scholl, author and lecturer, sends us his second volume of poetry, *The Rose Jar*, (Bijou Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan), which opens with a sonnet sequence of thirty-two sonnets entitled, "The Artist to an Unknown Lady." This is a romantic and colourful and successful expression, of which we give the last sonnet :

And when the Bard shall chant his own last lay,
    The Painter put aside his latest brush,
    And over you too comes the sombre hush
Of endless years, when unknown locksmiths may
Unlock these hidden relics and display
    Your face and form, then white-haired men will crush
    The tears back, as unfading memories rush
    To greet the loveliest Lady of their day.

And they will name you for the aftertimes,
    And think of me as one who knew you well
And had your favour—till they read these rhymes
And know the truth. * * * When they have learned to spell
My hidden cipher, your fair fame will make
My name, too, deathless for your honour's sake.

Professor Scholl's answer to my letter concerning poetry gives two interesting paragraphs :

> "The poet has little need to theorize about his art, the less the better. It is his privilege to sing. He may find in song escape from reality, but may challenge it, laugh at it, reinterpret it, transform it, or he may recreate it in beauty for the sheer joy of it. If he is a fine personality and has had a rich life, and has learned to use his medium effectively, the poet adds to the permanent stock of beauty in the world, is co-creator with nature, and his best work will offer much for some and something for many, that they will want to keep alive.
>
> "In a world frantically striving for the sensationally new in form and substance, one may so easily torture reality into a monstrosity or cloud it into an unintelligible mist of words, that it has no chance of surviving beyond the moment, no appeal for the times to come."

"Be Off, Melancholy," is written in a favoured form by Professor Scholl. We find a number of his lyrics follow this pattern :

I pray you, Melancholy, leave me soon.
Why should we always be at afternoon
    Brooding on sunset and the falling night ?
    My heart beats morning and my feet are light
For swift dance. Why should you call the tune ?

Be off! Seek out some poor bedeviled wight
For whom the towers of heaven will seem more white
For every gloom here. Sing to him your rune,
I pray you, Melancholy!

I told her all my love. At first outright
She flashed me No!—then asked for time—to fight
Her fears—then held her hand out slowly—Aswoon
With bliss, I folded her in. And now it's June
And sunrise in Eden! Henceforth keep out of sight,
I pray you, Melancholy!

The year of 1936 brought to the reviewers' desks a number of volumes of poetry from Western and Southern Universities, emphasizing that poetry is becoming more and more an essential part of American national life.

Darkling Plain, a fifth book from Mrs. Sara Bard Field (Random House), carries an interesting " Note to Fellow Marxists," in which the author considers the position of poets toward the social unrest of their day,—the wisdom or unwisdom of the poets dealing with such problems in articulated revolutionary poetry.

Quoting Mrs. Field:

> " A sentimental legend has depicted the poet as a dreamer, detached from interest in contemporary human affairs. Poems must be made in brooding seclusion but often the subjects of them deal with the chaotic or tragic facts of the immediate moment. Our immediate moment, threshold of profound change, is marked by violence, tyranny and a new evaluation of social justice. Certain poets are gifted to write these things. Others, though as sensitively aware of and responsive to them, can not make poetry about them. We thus have poets centered in time and poets centered in eternity. Yet the centre may prove to be the same for both circumferences. . . . To serve, however humbly, and with however a diminutive pitcher, the eternal fountain of poetry seems to me an immense privilege."

Darkling Plain is divided into four groups. From the second group in this collection, entitle " Between Darkness and Light," we have chosen " Foreshortened " for its newness of expression of a time-worn subject:

I used to think a long back while,
Small feet upon a timeless way,
That summer walked Forever's aisle
Of leafy pillars—and to-day
June hardly fills one rose before
I hear the stroke of Autumn's clock
And, down the shrunken corridor,
Finality of snapping lock.

From the third group, "Planetary Light," we give the sonnet "October Holiday" because of its persuasive and graphic atmosphere:

> Now the good scent of apples on warm air
> And grapes fermenting in the ample vat,
> Hillsides a crimson-bannered country fair
> And rusty gold the orchards in the flat;
> A lately littered tigress stretched to sun,
> Our vineyard hill, in rich abandonment
> Of autumn earth acknowledging well won
> Her fallow laziness and eased content.
> A blue jay pitches azure on a tree
> Where he discovers one late peach remains,
> A cock quail crow reminds us sturdily
> "I will not leave you with the winter rains
> If you share food." O comical, pert crest,
> Slick little partner, granted your request.

Not So Deep as a Well, by Dorothy Parker (Viking Press), represents the collected poems Miss Parker wishes to retain, together with several additional poems. Dorothy Parker's admirers—and they are legion—credit her with a light touch and the ability as well to plumb the depths, a devastating wit and a tender heart.

Miss Parker has been on the editorial staff of both *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue* and is now a free lance writer. She is the author of—*Enough Rope*, *Sunset Gun*, *Laments for the Living*, *Death and Taxes*, *After Such Pleasures*, etc., and was judged the winner of the O. Henry short story contest in 1921.

It is difficult to make a selection from these amusing and sparkling pages. "A Pig's-Eye View of Literature" gives evidence of this poet's humour:

> Byron and Shelley and Keats
> Were a trio of lyrical treats.
> The forehead of Shelley was cluttered with curls,
> And Keats never was a descendant of earls,
> And Byron walked out with a number of girls,
>   But it didn't impair the poetical feats
>   Of Byron and Shelley,
>   Of Byron and Shelley,
>   Of Byron and Shelley and Keats.

Excellent sonnets we find in this collection, written after the accepted tradition. "I Shall Come Back" follows:

> I shall come back without fanfaronade
> Of wailing wind and graveyard panoply;
> But, trembling, slip from cool Eternity—
> A mild and most bewildered little shade.

I shall not make sepulchral midnight raid,
But softly come where I had longed to be
In April twilight's unsung melody,
And I, not you, shall be the one afraid.

Strange, that from lovely dreamings of the dead
I shall come back to you, who hurt me most.
You may not feel my hand upon your head,
I'll be so new and inexpert a ghost.
Perhaps you will not know that I am near—
And that will break my ghostly heart, my dear.

Rudolph Gilbert, poet and essayist, presents an interesting series of essays in *Shine, Perishing Republic*, (Bruce, Humphries). Of them he says :

> " These essays, it is hoped, will introduce new readers to Robinson Jeffers. A poet of his power sees with a too complex vision ' the spiritual realities to which the material realities correspond ' to be understood by proxy. Only by a daring leap into the midst of the foaming, resounding storm-waves of his titanic poems can the reader become sensible of the ' divine vision in time of trouble ' of Robinson Jeffers. For he, like Blake, will never be among our popular poets."

In a letter recently received from Gilbert, he writes :

> " I am very much interested in your questions ; in my next essays on modern poetry I am trying hard to answer just such questions.
>
> " Modern poetry has passed the period of revolt. It seems that the modern, or the poet of the near future, is sick of form inventions but is eagerly seeking for fresh material for his liberated forms.
>
> " Poetry as the primary art of the human mind is gradually taking place of dogmatic religion. It will remain the only living link between religion and philosophy. Every real poem is a revelation of the human spirit, his age and culture. Poets still suffer unpopularity, because they have not learned to write as yet for the many. The modern poets' poetry is due to immature exhaustion of our too materialistic world conception."

From his essay " Mysticism and Symbolism," we quote :

> " Jeffers's is not the beatific but the apocalyptic vision—' as if it were a mountain burning with fire cast into the sea.' He belongs to the philosophic-minded mystics. The conception that dominates his poems is that of a supreme, all-pervading Power in which all things are one, a being somewhat like the Grecian Pan, that all-healing god of the Universe. He sees the cosmic system unfolding itself, step by step, from unity to multiplicity, and returning to unity again. His ideas are often difficult to unravel,

and his appeal is to mystical intuition rather than to pure reason."

Robinson Jeffers is fortunate in having so brilliant-minded and so sympathetic an admirer as Rudolph Gilbert to introduce him to a wider public.

Gilbert gives us his estimate of several of our leading poets in the following essay, "Poetry, Civilization and Nature":

> "Our present-day poets, Carl Sandburg and Edgar Lee Masters and the late Vachel Lindsay, have all sung the typical hundred per cent Americanism. Edwin Arlington Robinson sings of our decadent city life, Frost of decadent New England farmers, but Jeffers of the decadent continent of America. We see why Plato excluded poets from his Republic—they belong to the 'politics of eternity.' . . . To-day, Engle, an adolescent good will poet, sings again, 'the unique American dream,' and 'the old American courage' under the New Deal plan. He finds America a land of youth, hope and God's plenty. We must take him with perceived sense of irony and not superiority."

This is an excellent consideration of poetry,—a book to read, a book to own.

David Morton's tenth volume of poems, *Spell Against Time* (G. P. Putnam and Sons), again show that this Professor of English at Amherst since 1924, who has conspicuously influenced American letters, is a true singer, whose poetry is deservedly beloved—unfailingly musical, delicate in perception. Morton is much more than a technician,—as readers of the following fine sonnet, "December Wind," will agree:

What is there for this wind to take way,
That it should labour so through earth and sky?
Nothing is left of summer that could stay
Beyond the earlier wind, and no leaves lie
In huddled heaps or scattered on the lawn,
Waiting the end that none of us can guess:
The hour of going came, and they are gone.
This wind will labour in great emptiness—

And drive against the window and the door,
And cry in cornices its angry calls
At finding that it should have come before,—
And seek more arrogant transients within walls
Who huddle and quake and hide themselves behind
The bolted storm-door and the shuttered blind.

Also lovely is "Example and Precept":

There is the last tree
On the last hill,
Learning how to be
Lonely—and still;

Learning how to stand
Lonely—and strong,
Above the soft land
And the land's wrong.

Be lonely, heart . . . be
Strong and still
Like the last tree
On the last hill.

Too beautiful to pass is "Betrayal":

Our love is all that is
Immortal in us here,
Burning and free, and this
We give away to the dear
Look of a flower at dawn
Or a face like light—
And one to the dust has gone
And one to the night,
Bearing away with them
All that we had to give:
Our love on petal and stem,
Our love that wanted to live
In love's immortal way—
That moral things betray.

Replying to a letter from the writer, David Morton sends us the following paragraph:

> "I think a good deal about the subject of poetry in the modern world—all of us do, these days. What the world has lost, temporarily, is a sense of the pieties, those ancient and persisting sanctions whose presence is our only security, and which we disregard at our peril. It has always been the high function of poetry to affirm and embody these things. There has never been a time when the world needed so acutely that affirmation, as now. . . . More narrowly and specifically, also, there is this: The element of disciplined order in life, and the beauty arising out of it, are on the wane in the disordered hysteria of the modern world. Now poetry—or let us say, a poem—is a sharp reminder of that element of order and its inevitable beauty, in a world that is peculiarly in need of that reminder."

This first book of poems from Robert Francis, *Stand With Me Here*, (Macmillan Co.), brings the reader an immediate realization that here is a calm, meditative, youthful mind enriched by the compelling sense of beauty.

David Morton writes me: "I have been a good deal excited by a new poet just emerging over the horizon, Robert Francis. . . . I think he is one of the figures of the near future—a Harvard graduate who is living in Amherst."

There is much of New England in Robert Francis's book, a kind of passionate reserve we find in many of these poems. We give the first: " Roots "—

Here might a man, childlike, unbind his boots,
Go with bared feet, and sometimes, pausing, stand
To feel with the foot's depth the years of mould
Through which the buried roots, the living roots
Climb down to levels more profoundly old—
Eons of rock, centuries of sand.

Here might the foot feel and the slowed mind feel
What the root feels in its deep wanderings.
For mind can probe the obstinate hidden boulder
With fibres tenuous yet tough as steel
And climbing down to levels deeper, older,
Search, reach, and drink perennial springs.

An admission of belief in fatalism, we find in " Invitation." (It is interesting to read in the first section of Kipling's Autobiography, the following admission of belief in fatalism:

> " Looking back from this, my seventieth year, it seems to me that every card in my working life has been dealt me in such a manner that I had but to play it as it came.")

You who have meant to come, come now
With strangeness on the morning snow
Before the early morning plow
Makes half the snowy strangeness go.

You who have meant to come, come now
When only *your* footprints will show,
Before one overburdened bough
Spills snow above on snow below.

You who were meant to come, come now.
If you were meant to come, you'll know.

" Dirge," the following poem, has a graphic quality, so marked in this poet's writing:

They are the dead who died of thirst
With water near, who never found
The cool, unfathomable well
Or the deep pool they thirsted for.
Who listening never caught the sound
Made by contented water flowing
Over green contented ground.
They died despairing and unknowing—
The unnecessary dead who fell

Almost beside the reservoir.
But there was no one there to tell
Of water to those men in thirst.
And now it is too late to tell.

Mr. Francis sends us his stand in relation to poetry. It is so excellent we give it in its entirety:

> "I like wholesome poetry. I use 'wholesome' in its literal sense. I like poetry in which the poet gives us his whole self—his thought as well as his emotion, his waking self as well as his dream, his humour no less than his passion, the child in him and the mature man, the craftsman and the prophet. And all this formed and fused in imagination. Clear on the surface although perhaps too deep to see bottom. I like Valery's fine phrase: the collaboration of the whole man. Such is my ideal. And such, it seems to me, is especially our need to-day when forces tend to break up the personality. Social purpose and technical experiment have their place in poetry, but when they crowd out everything else and the poetry is chiefly propagandist or experimental, we have poetic emaciation. A good poem ought not to be so different from a living man: bone, flesh, blood, brain."

A first book of poems, *River Acres* (The Kaleidograph Press), reaches us from Ruth Vail, of North Carolina. Mrs. Vail has been honoured by poetry prizes and by mention here and abroad. A member of The Poetry Society for several years, she writes us of her enjoyment of The Poetry Review and sends us a paragraph on poetry, as follows:

> "Poetry is the harvest song of the turmoil and restless growth of man's soul, the loved and old racial memories ever strained through new blood's outpouring ecstasy. . . . Because I feel so strongly life pleading through me—as one of its myriad voices—striving for form and expression, I try to write poetry. It comforts me and helps me in my daily living. I like metre too, but the psalm-like tidal waves of fine free verse appeal to me more."

Born and reared near the little town of Hertford on the picturesque river Perquimams, and spending twenty-six years in the old historic town of Edenton, the book abounds with Mrs. Vail's appreciation of the fields, harvests of planters, of man's labours and of the God he works to find through those labours, discovering beauty in common things. *River Acres* is further evidence that poetry is becoming more each day an integral part of American life.

In another first volume, *Passing Moons*, by Jeanette E. Talcott, (Thomas Seltzer), we find a number of short expressive lyrics. Of poetry, Mrs. Talcott tells us:

> "The essence of poetry is rhythm. And its creation is through imagination. Without these two qualities, it is impossible to become an inspired poet or poetess.
>
> "If poetry carries any message it is because if correctly expressed an outlet to those who must of necessity dwell in a world of practical facts, who may for a brief moment glimpse the world that is of the spirit.
>
> "As for the value of poetry in modern life, that is questionable. It cannot be comprehensive, because in this sadly material world, there is little time to dwell on beauty, there is little time to analyse."

We find the keynote to another first book of poetry, *A Little Book of Songs*, by Jerome Sapir (Bruce Humphries & Co.), in the Dedication:

> to the Common People from whom all Beauty is born and to whom it returns, that same people who, since the birth of Man, have bled themselves as a sacrifice on the altar of progress.

Sapir sends us some arresting comments on poetry. This poet begins by saying:

> "Poetry, like America, should be strong and beautiful. I am a carpenter's son. The little honour I achieve as a poet will be the honour of the labouring class. A man's calling is as great as his ideals and as low. The greatest teacher is not the man who knows, but the man who inspires. Poets, like doctors, should avoid publicity. Scholars write books about books. Imagination is the dynamo of human progress. Science is a theorizing of what we do not know; poetry a feeling of what we cannot understand."

"Peace" gives us the poet's understanding of himself:

Though lonely among men,
No fame nor wealth my lot,—
Though born to a humble hearth,
Friendless and unsought,
While those I love with passion
Move in high degree
And sail beyond my raptures
Like stars by a stormy sea—
Yet I whistle in contentment,
I have what no one buys—
An honest heart, a pure pen,
Two kindly burning eyes,
And a country where God's soul beats
And freedom never dies.

The age in which we live is set forth in "This Is An Age of Fog":

An age when visions, like many-coloured bubbles,
Meet in the mist and burst
And the vapours, descending,
Cloud the earth and all mankind
And sink within their gaudy temples
Like a shroud.
This is an Age of Fear,
An age in trembling wedged
Between the awful Future and majestic Past;
Where the mist is not darkness hangs
And hinders men from groping for they know not what,
From falling, like great human bats,
In caverns whence they'll never out.
Like a meteor flashing through the Chaos
Some lone voice calls for God.

Franklin Pierce Adams, well-known to hundreds of readers of his column in the *Herald Tribune* as " F.P.A.," gives us in his new book, *The Melancholy Lute* (Viking Press), selected songs of thirty years. Born in Chicago in the early 80's, a graduate of Armour Scientific Academy, and a student in the University of Michigan, Mr. Adams has many books to his credit; among them *Tobogganing on Parnassus*, 1910; *In Other Words*, 1912; *By and Large*: 1914; *Weights and Measures*, 1917; *Something Else Again*, 1920; *Overset*, 1922; *So There*, 1922; *So Much Velvet*, 1924; *Half a Loaf*, 1927; *Christopher Columbus*, 1931; *The Diary of Our Own Samuel Pepys*, 1935.

Lively humour and a facile pen mark this ready-rhymster's verse, " F.P.A.," who has brightened the column known as *The Conning Tower* these many moons. This selection is well-worth the gathering together in a volume, if only to accentuate the nimble wit and ability of this clever columnist and author. We give " The Coward," a touching tribute to Housman:

I walked alone in Weston
The day that Housman died,
And pondered the perfection
Of his poetic pride.

And how the songs of scholars
Are simple songs and sure,
How utter is the music,
How true the note, and pure.

I walked alone in Weston
The night that Housman died,
And craved the simple courage
To lay my pen aside.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

NATURE IN MODERN LIFE

A PROBLEM which poets have to face earlier and more constantly in life than most other people is the place of nature in our largely urban existence. The reason why most of England's best contemporary writers of poetry (from the technical point of view) are producing work which is an escape from contemporary life, rather than a force in it or even a clear vision of it, is probably that they have been unable to solve if even to face this problem. Its solution lies simply in the recognition of nature as life-as-it-naturally-is and not life as the English tenant-farmer would make it. The most unnatural acts, such as the construction of railways or pylons, become part of the natural scheme of things as soon as they are accomplished, and, although they come as a contrast to the rural tradition of English poetry, they cannot be ignored. The poetry of Spenser and Wordsworth is of the countryside not for the sake of beauty—for beauty lives not in things but in the mind's reception of them—but because their world was of the country, as was that of all England when even the city of London was surrounded by fields, not suburbs, and song emanated from all, not from the few. The Elizabethan poets enriched their English countryside with the intellectual treasures of the Renaissance; but the poets of our own day find the intellectual stimulus of the age of science incompatible with their ideas of nature. To reconcile it with the pastoral would be a feat no greater than that of the Elizabethans.

If this *rapprochement* can be achieved, the future of nature poetry—with a broader and less precious interpretation of nature—is secure; and the poets most likely to bring about this *rapprochement* are, perhaps, those who obstinately continue to write on pastoral themes, but have such a consciousness of man's present needs and feelings that their work has a reality which the common run of post-Swinburne singers lack. The most distinguished of these rural realists is Robert Frost whose American fame has been slow to cross the Atlantic. Two volumes of his work have been published in England recently by Jonathan Cape; the earlier and more important *Selected Poems* (5s.), to which has now been added a book of new poems *A Further Range* (5s.). The *Selected Poems* are introduced by essays by W. H. Auden, C. Day Lewis, Paul Engle and Edwin Muir; but despite these it is difficult for English readers to appreciate the appeal of Frost's "modern Georgics," as Ezra Pound has called them. While we can appreciate their simplicity and integrity and be strangely moved by their unstrained pathos, they do not convey to us the vivid message that reached Engle in his rich prairie land in the Middle West. The poems are not of an Englishman for Englishmen, but in their mirror we can catch a far more accurate and pleasing picture of America than is reflected in the more usual glass of the popular press and the cinema.

Frost's work is certainly an object lesson for writers in these times of changing word-values, for, as Edwin Muir writes, "Mr. Frost uses these words with consummate skill; but as his constant aim is to define them, that is to select one meaning out of the many they possess and use that only, his poetry is of a very peculiar kind; for most of the poetry we know proceeds by the opposite method, giving words a many-sided significance." Owing to this his long poems are remarkably well sustained, their flat conversational manner never lagging, while most of his short poems are finely-wrought things, such as "Fire and Ice":

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favour fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

When Frost sets himself to speak for the inarticulate, the servant to servants, the hill wife and the most retiring of New Englanders, the small farmer, he limits his profundity and variety of thought, and his art becomes almost that of a dramatist. This work is a great service, while such lyrics as "The Soldier" show the intensity of which his conception is capable.

His new work *A Further Range* is more facile but more superficial. He has grown more confident, more set, more trite. Such consummate poems as "On the Heart's Beginning to Cloud the Mind," which opens lightly—

Something I saw or thought I saw
In the desert at midnight in Utah,
Looking out of my lower berth
At moonlit sky and moonlit earth,

are offset by this sort of verse:

An ant on the table-cloth
Ran into a dormant moth
Of many times his size.
He showed not the least surprise.

Nevertheless the book contains several worthy additions to Frost's already large store of achievements.

His influence on English poetry has come chiefly through his friend and, to some extent, his disciple, Edward Thomas, whose *Collected Poems* (Faber, 3s. 6d.) fill a place in English letters and the English landscape comparable with Frost's in America. Although his life was tragically cut short just when his long preparation was turning to achievement, Edward Thomas has left a number of lyrics whose influence, like those of Hopkins, is great out of all proportion to their numbers. Walter de la Mere writes in the foreword "There is nothing precious, elaborate, brilliant, esoteric, obscure in his work. The feeling is never 'fine,' the thought never curious, or the word far-fetched. Loose-woven, monotonous, unrelieved, the verse, as verse, may appear to a careless reader accustomed to the customary. It must be read slowly, as naturally as if it were talk, without much emphasis; it will then surrender himself, his beautiful world, his compassionate and suffering heart, his fine, lucid, grave and sensitive mind." This summary is equally applicable to Frost, the resemblance to whom is, perhaps, best seen in "Adlestrop," which has the same elusive pertinence as "On the Heart's Beginning" but an individuality that has won it fame:

Yes. I remember Adlestrop—
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop—only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

These two men have written what is greater and more enduring than "nature poetry," a term which must perforce describe *Green Legacy* (Cape, 5s.) by Stanley Snaith whose earlier volume *Fieldfaring* was distinguished by one or two outstanding pieces. Here again are a few notable lyrics set among many merely pleasant. Snaith's poems also speak for the small farmer; nearly as practical as Frost's, less universal or vivid. One of the best lyrics is "Wilderness," opening:

These stand at the earth's end
Between the last fields and the desert of water—
Dune after dune of chiselled scalps and falls,
Hugging blue shadow, and the sunlight gazing
From late-left pools.

His creed is that of Frost and Thomas and of every countryman since Piers Plowman: one of stoic resignation. On the "Death of a Farmer":

Though these he has lost for ever, wind and sun
Do not forsake the grain he could not reap:
True to their phantom husbandry, they run
Sickling a mile of silver in one sweep.

This is the last word of the countryman; earth, sky, tree can teach no more.

The first word of the townsman, however, is considerably less assuring. *Poems* (Hogarth, 3s. 6d.) are written by Christopher Lee in a series of metropolitan jerks. It is, perhaps, natural that in comparison with rigid machines and angular buildings mankind should appear furtive and sensuous, but its constant portrayal as such can appeal only to a certain type of adolescent mind. Christopher Lee in his own way has tried to give the natural world its right status, but he has set about it by exaggerating the unnatural in an attempt to make it acceptable as natural. When he rids himself of this complex he achieves something of real value, like the last of what he misguidedly calls a sequence of sonnets.

It is debatable whether these sociological questions come strictly within the sphere of poetry; but it is probably safe to assume that poetry is still the pioneer of this as much as of other thought. Its narrow searchlight has a longer range than the broad floodlight of prose. An interesting example of the collateral functions of prose and poetry is afforded by E. H. R. Altounyan's *Ornament of Honour* (C.U.P., 7s. 6d.) which is addressed to T. E. Lawrence. It is more than an elegy by a friend; the author maintains that it was " designed as a memorial embodying what I believe to be our common philosophy of life. . . . The work is an attempt on an ambitious scale to see the universe and man's relation to it from without." As the natural complement to the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* it is in some ways more personal even than that personal document; in some it has a more universal application. The standard of writing is high throughout most of the long poem which holds a strange synthesis of emotion and abstract thought:

When all men praise thee, then I count it loss;
For how can one add to the voice of all?
But when one blames, then all my gold is dross
Till I have spent it to inscribe thy pall
In golden letters that shall outlive both
Thy fame and myself living, single, loth.
Intemperate my grief; distraught I rage,
Until thy tempered mind inscribes my page;
Then cooled yet sparkling in the cool-eyed morn,
With clear resolve I clearly thee adorn,
My passion moulded to the sinewed line
Of sonnet, or some looser full design:
And if all blame the verse that I indite,
One praises, and this darkness turns to light,

has a sincerity and high quality which should make a worthy and lasting memorial to one who had reconciled nature, and especially human nature, for better or worse with modern life.

It may be of interest to add that this remarkable philosophical poem was written in Aleppo within six months of the news of Lawrence's death, Altounyan having known him since 1911. It is intended as a memorial, and to embody the philosophy that Lawrence stood for. " The standpoint throughout is his view as seen by me," writes the author, " and talked over with me." The poem is in three long movements, each of which is essential to the expression, though the Fugue, of 119 sonnets, is the most memorable. The whole work is an attempt on an ambitious scale to see the universe and man's relation to it, from without. It is as unrelated to time as any poem can be. The conclusion is stoical—a determination to a deliberate act of faith. The publishers have " not sent it out as a document but as an achievement, with the expectation that the passion and vigour of its expression will find critics and appreciators." The author is a surgeon and the son of a surgeon. He was educated at Rugby and graduated in medicine at Cambridge. He served with the R.A.M.C. in the 1914–18 war.

Parody, it frequently has been observed, must be considerably more clever than the original in order to be successful. This may be the reason why the film scenario version of *Romeo and Juliet* is a mass of long and complicated stage directions, while the original has an average of three words of directions to a full page of dialogue, as can be seen now that the two versions have been set between the same covers in the excellent art volume published by Arthur Barker (8s. 6d.). The film is, after all, only a giant parody of the old Globe production, but as such it is extremely successful, and we hope critics will treat it, as it deserves to be treated, as a sincere and thorough attempt at reconstruction. The premier at His Majesty's Theatre has proved the success of the film, which has been more carefully prepared than former Shakespearean films—being a good deal sounder than the recent *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the other productions of this " revival," and infinitely better than the painful versions of *The Taming of the Shrew* and some others which were thrust upon the country by enterprising Hollywood magnates some years ago. To inveterate Shakespeare-lovers the new edition of the text with its novel marginal notes will be perhaps an unpalatable novelty, but they would do well to sympathize with this attempt to reconcile Shakespeare with the modern world, which has been done so seriously that even the cast have written, at the end of the book, illuminating if faintly amusing impressions of the characters they play; thus " Juliet " by Norma Shearer:

> " To know Juliet as Shakespeare created her is to love her. For Juliet is love. . . . "

Romeo also is analysed by Leslie Howard, and Mercutio by John Barrymore.

Parody of a wider kind is the main function of verse. Verse which is not poetry is at its best when playing the ape, and the verse of Marmaduke Dixey is the most successfully apish we have seen since Hilaire Belloc wrote his last cautionary tale. Of this type of verse it may be said that if it's good it's very very good, and fortunately we have not to deal with any of the inferior type. *Words, Beasts and Fishes* (Faber, 6s.) maintains a high standard of animal verses which deal no more with animals than La Fontaine's *Fables* did. The biting satire which pervades them is most vehement in " Poet and Pheasant " which ends :

> When all were slaughtered, more or less,
> A poet in the feathered press
> Declared that slaughter for a pheasant
> Was rather glorious than unpleasant.
>
> And General Beater, now promoted,
> One evening, during dinner, voted
> That in the coverts be interred
> The body of " AN UNKNOWN BIRD."

In our consideration of verse and drama it must not be forgotten that prose also has its parodies, the latest of which is *Parody Party* (Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.) in which Rose Macaulay, Edward Shanks, A. G. Macdonell, Ivor Brown and others more seldom mentioned in these pages, under the editorship of Leonard Russell, combine to write parodies of the latest work of famous post-war writers. Those who recall our appreciation of *Sparkenbroke* will derive considerable amusement from the vision of Lord Sepulchre " walking up and down the platform two or three times, thinking of the absolute." and those who have read one of the 70,000 copies of *They Walk in the City* will find its much-discussed poetic prose adroitly satirized in *Eden Week-End.* As several of those responsible for this disrespectful book are exponents or critics of to-day's poetry, we may hope that they will find enough support to enable them to give a Parody Party at the expense of the modern muse.

JOHN H. ELLIOT.

REVOLUTIONARY AESTHETICS

Illusion and Reality, a Study of the Sources of Poetry, by Christopher Caudwell, (Macmillan, 18s.) is a curious and remarkable production,—a volume of over 350 pages, 13 pages being given up to a bibliography of some 500 works. Some of the sections, such as those styled, "The World and I," and "The Psyche and the Phantasy," are beyond one untrained in metaphysics and ignorant of the writings of Freud and Jung (names which frequently recur) and other psycho-analysts. But other sections can be read with interest. The author has thought deeply and acutely. The reader, however, will soon and often murmur to himself

Euphemia serves to grace my measure,
But Chloe is my real flame.

The author sees everything, poetry included, through Marxian spectacles. He is a communist of such rigid, heresy-hating orthodoxy that he sometimes startles his reader, who presumably imagines himself to be perusing a book about poetry, with a passage like this: "The bourgeois consciousness drags at the bourgeois revolutionary and produces in certain characters a hopeless cleavage, which makes the degeneration of some of its leaders a law of revolution. The record of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev are examples of how this may lead to complete treachery." Marx keeps popping up with the persistency with which King Charles's head would somehow unexpectedly find its way into the Memorial which David Copperfield's friend Mr. Dick spent his days in compiling.

In an interesting section Mr. Caudwell deals with English poets, from Shakespeare on, with reference to their reactions to their social and political environment. Of course they were all "bourgeois-poets." Messrs. Auden, Spender and Day Lewis may be somewhat horrified to learn that they have been similarly labelled.

And it appears that there is a good time coming for poets when the whole world adopts, of course very soon, the new constitution of Soviet Russia. Poets are promised sales running into millions, provided presumably, that the said poets have safe-guarded themselves against "liquidation" by joining the Party. For, to quote the author, "modern poetry is capitalist poetry." Still, it is a notable and provocative book of which more will be heard. I wish that I had space to quote some of the passages which arrested me. The publishers tell us that the real name of the author is Christopher St. John Sprigg, and that he was killed recently at the age of twenty-eight, in fighting for the Spanish Government at Madrid.

The Coronation is made the excuse for doing strange things. Among them is a book entitled *The Muse of Monarchy, Poems by Kings and Queens of England*, (Eric Grant, 5s.). Quite a number of Royalties appear here, from Richard I to Charlotte Sophia. More than one poem is in harmony with what history tells us of the character of the author, or alleged author, though, as for centuries the writing of songs and verses was a current amusement among the great, we need not question the authenticity of these poems. I doubt whether any of them will find favour, although the publishers inform (or mercifully, warn) us that some of them will be broadcast on Coronation Day.

Immortal poetry was written by, or is attributed to, two monarchs, David and Solomon. And there is the dying Hadrian's address to his soul, "Animula, vagula, blandula." I foresee no addition to these three names.

Mr. Harrold Johnson has published *The Voice of One, a Coronation Garland*, (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.). Mr. Johnson is engaged upon a sequence of books of lyrics. *English Lyrics* and four other volumes have already appeared, and now he gives us *Empire Lyrics*. From the praise which he quotes by eminent critics of his former books, I am regretfully compelled to infer that he has not maintained his usual standard. He is sensitive to the beauty of Nature, and he usually writes easily, fluently, and not infrequently musically. But his thought is generally conventional, and more than once he shows extraordinary lapses in craftsmanship. How does he scan, " Here Columba communed, they say," or " Strave within the realm, the foe without ? " (Perhaps one might draw out the intentionally heavy word " strave," but the effect is hardly pleasing to the ear).

Again, it is amazing to find him rhyming " thyme " with " time," and I am baffled by the couplet

" They peep out of the crevices,
They stain the granite and the gneisses."

But he is also capable of things like

" The tide hurls surf from reefs and shoals,
The shingle shivers as it rolls."

where the alliteration and the internal assonance yield a real sound-picture. And here is a pleasant example of his lyrical melody:

" And, lo, from the Seven Seas they come,
Star-led, the wise of Christendom,
The cradle of their Faith to see,
To offer gifts and bend the knee ;
For on this Holy Isle there dwells
A peace no tongue of mortal tells,
A silence words may not express,
A brooding and a wistfulness ;
A Light was ne'er on sea or land
A glamour as of fairy-land."

I must admit that purists might censure the last rhyme as faulty and certainly that they would remark that the beautiful penultimate line is lifted straight from Wordsworth.

The Muse in Chains (Cape, 7s. 6d.), by Stephen Potter, is a lively but scholarly account of the evolution of the academic study of English Literature, illustrated by amusing examples of how the poor Muse has been maltreated by pedantic lecturers and examiners. I found it so entertaining that a " thriller " in which I had been immersed lay neglected. For all I cared, the Secret Service hero and the Mysterious Chinaman might wipe each other out, and the lovely heroine in the slowly-filling cellar might save herself by emulating " Macpherson's son, Who married Noah's daughter, And nearly spoiled the Flood By drinking up the water." What I wanted was to finish Mr. Potter's book. Here are a couple of his pieces of wise advice:

> " What is certain is that the best crop to be garnered by the study of English Literature is a late one. Self-knowledge has

> no meaning for the adolescent. Before twenty, education is of the foetus."
>
> ". . . the concentrated study of three or four great writers, chosen not for their high degree of literary virtuosity (no bellelettrists), nor for their far-apartness in historical time, nor for the fact that one wrote mostly in verse, another mostly in prose, and another mostly drama, but for the intensity, the completeness, with which they express each a different shape of the human spirit."

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

POETRY AND MYSTICISM

The Metaphysical Poets (Macmillan, 15s.), by Helen C. White, has the sub-title of " A Study in Religious Experience," and the author approaches her subject with exceptional understanding and scholarship. Her opening chapter on " Mysticism and Poetry," in which she reasons that " poetry and mysticism belong to the same world and are subject to much the same processes," shows her to have personal experience of both, and this makes her particularly fitted to discuss this group of poets. In addition she has a wide knowledge of the intellectual and religious " climate " of their days and is as much aware of present day criticism, such as that of Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. J. B. Leishman (whose book, of the same title, we recently reviewed) as she is of the comments of Dr. Johnson and the earlier critics of each poet.

Mr. Edward Ellul describes his *Merry-Go-Round* as " a kind of poetry " (Boehringer 5s.). It is a curious satire in blank verse consisting of soliloquies of speakers called " The Romantic Rider," " The Voice of Vagueness," etc., who draw upon themselves the sarcasm (often in broad slang) of certain " Eavesdroppers." But through it all appear frequent lines of genuine poetry and a shrewd philosophy, which are forceful enough to emerge from this sea of extremes instead of being drowned in it, such lines as

They listen to the silence as to a voice,
silence, to them the vastest voice of all,
night, silent night, well-nigh articulate,
aware and a-rustle with the speech of trees !
But the trouble is the living cannot rely on their love,
and the poor dead, they cannot be sure of their graves.
. . . . A lovely song
sweetens even the silence after it ;

for instance. But I really think Mr. Ellul has made a good joke and is enjoying it himself. He is, incidentally, Secretary of L'Institute Française.

To students of French in particular Miss Ruth Harrison is already known through one of Gollancz' "Books for Schools," *An Approach to French Poetry*, and now Messrs. Gollancz have published a volume of her own poetry, *Beauty Sentinel* (6s.). Her poems are of that delightful elusive quality, seemingly so detached that they awake an immediate response, and yet their ultimate message is often to herself alone. Her acceptance of life, and its inevitable pain, is of such courage as to become intense delight:

On either side of pain
Stands Beauty Sentinel.
None shall come through in vain,

and this delight is enhanced by her individual phrasing and imagery, while the reader is teased but not dismayed by the wilful slight obscurity, as in "Fallen Feather":

Now to the safeguarding of lost delight,
Our lives are bent. We watch the wingèd joy,
That carrier-bird, ride on, on, out of sight.

The vagaries, returns and swift deploy,
The unaccountable, too sudden swoop
Retrieved at almost breaking point, the bruising,
Are common knowledge now.
                    Yet still we droop
As men have always drooped at sweet joy's losing;
Only on this one claim stand stubborn too:
All that joy promised, *that*, we hold, is true.

Winter's no pitfall, night no stumbling-block,
Belief in promise towers in autumned land
And stern resolve grows fruit from marsh or rock.
Like a fallen feather we gather a word so bland,
So sonorous—were it once rung in every year,
It would set the whole old, merry world a-tilt.

O who shall be your bard that all may hear!
Bend we our lives to the shaping of this lilt.

All that joy promised, *that*, we hold, is true.

In the "Series of Readings by their authors from recently published volumes of poems deserving of recognition," several members of The Poetry Society have been heard, giving an added interest to these interesting occasions. Mrs. Margaret Egerton, author of *The Tread of Time* (Blackwell, 4s. 6d.), is also a painter and lithographer of distinction, and the artist's touch is noticeable in her attention to form, as in the strict sonnets, as well as in her pictorial colours. Her thoughts and images are stimulating, and their aptness and associations pleasingly established. Idea, picture and frame, do not invariably harmonize completely, but there is no compromise with truth; where a round peg is planted in a square hole, the corners may be filled in but the circle is never bent out of shape; and this integrity, a valuable part of poetry, is well shown in "Poet Builders."

Some poets build for love and some for fame;
Some pile on words, as loose stones in a heap;

Others like masons making walls, who keep
Their fine-hewn blocks close-fitted to the frame.
Fashioning mere sound of words is not the aim
But music uttered in the mind and soul,
Quickening the poet's thought until the whole
Work shines transformed, as by celestial flame.

For thee, for thee alone I built my thought
Into a castle high above the cloud
Where floating on in melody I sought
Low spoken tones, none blazoned now aloud.
If thou shouldst listen here to songs thus brought,
No bard of old has stood more wreathed, more proud.

Poems both of Miss Harrison and Mrs. Egerton have also recently been published in a small Anthology, Poems of A Verse Club.

Amber Lloyd, who read from *To Swallows* (Harrods, Ltd., 2s. 6d.), is mostly concerned with natural scenes, and depicts them with great delicacy of detail and freshness of observation, intensifying them with charming imagery. Where others use nature as a background and illustrator to human life, Mrs. Anstruther works often in a different direction, using human images to give significance to her landscape, as in these lines from " Burnham Beeches " :

O valiant veterans, each crowned with gold,
Your glory still remains from days of old !
O giant relics, age-long past your prime—
Crusaders fighting holy war with Time—
Your standards yet aloft are proudly borne
In coloured pennons flaunted high, though torn,
Those foliaged ramparts of your timbered forts
For centuries assailed by gales' onslaughts.

Miss Melfin W. Jones, the third reader, gave to her poems *The Hour Glass* (Hughes and Sons, 3s. 6d.) an added intensity in her rendering of them. One realized how much her country and her country's themes meant to her, and also how greatly she cared for the other things she could share more generally. " A Child's Grave," for instance, will reach every heart :

They carved your name in marble cold and strange—
  You who were young and warm ;
To hold your memory through the seasons' change,
  From dew to winter storm.

Yet would it not be lovelier, little one,
  To plant for you a tree,
Whose slender shade might shield you from the sun,
  But call the stars to see. . . .

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For while your name in lingering dirges sweet
  The nameless birds might sing,
It would in autumn weep upon your feet,
  And kiss your eyes in spring.

Flower Songs and *Nature Poems*, two small volumes by R. G. Duff (Blackwell), contain poems light and fanciful in form and tone; but where the stronger stuff of true imagination is put into the stronger form of the sonnet, even though Mr. Duff is turning his back on the countryside for a moment in "The Clock-Tower," he is more satisfying:

Tall Watchman, standing in the evening-shine
Above the river and the traffic's stream,
And lifting up thy litany supreme
Of strength and beauty unto the divine,
Still heavens, dost thou ask of them a sigh
Of some high duty, that may thee beseem
Amid thy golden minarets of dream?—
Warder of Westminster, what task is thine?

Thou watchest how the tides about thy feet
Throb at the heart of Heaven's far-off beat,
The planets round the starry dial swing,
And all the stars march Godward, beckoning—
And then thou metest out with solemn chime
The fleeting glory of the wings of Time!

The short sonnet sequence giving the title, *X of Y* (Hall, 2s. 6d.), to a small book of Leslie Hinchcliffe Winn is moving and dignified; and there are lyrics of charm and variety. The poetry of "town" is again given in "Westminster Abbey," a form not without blemish, but definitely moving:

Men little thought, who raised these chiselled stones
  To bind up Truth with beauty of design,
  Portraying soul with love's entrancing line,
That kings, who knew the prison house of thrones,
Would first taste liberty with coffined bones,
  Here finding peace at last and rest benign;
  Men little thought that in the self-same shrine
The Nation's heart would bury its deep moans

And bring a semblance from across the sea
And give it honour and, by common will,
A resting place beneath this canopy.
O nameless, deathless soldier, sleep on still,
And sleep within our golden youth, until
The world needs thee again for liberty.

E. D. Bangay.

What is the true function of the biographer? Is it a record of facts which should be verified, or a re-incarnation of personality? Which ever definition is accepted, *The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë* (Rich and Cowen), by Virginia Moore, is disappointing: because facts are not verified and there is no life in Emily's re-incarnation. A more lively personality picture, appropriately illustrated by Emily's poems and drawings with an appendix of details interesting to Brontë students, would have been acceptable even to a Brontë-sufficed public; but here is a record without life, and inaccurate detail mixed up in re-incarnation. This biography does service, however, in the recognition of Emily's genius as an artist: gleams of genius evident both in the illustrations (particularly in her sketches of a pine-tree and of her dog "Keeper") and in most of her poems. One can find the shining of the moon genius of Coleridge in

"It will not shine again;
Its sad course is done;
I have seen the last ray wane
Of the cold, bright sun."

It is possible, though, that Miss Moore's re-valuation may help Emily to take her recognized place among the men and women of artistic genius who died young—loved by the gods or killed by the gods' enemies who would not countenance the completion of such promise.

Putnam's *Marguerite of Navarre* (John Long) provides an interesting comparison, both in subject matter and in style. As a record of facts, this book also has its bewildering moments: on one page the biographer states "she (Marguerite) is of a line . . . to which the English Milton belongs. . . ." on the next, "the fact is, Marguerite is not . . . a poet at all." This type of contradiction occurs too often in the narrative. And here as well, there is little life given to Marguerite and the background which frames her: Miss Moore and Mr. Putnam seem to have literary faults and virtues in common. Here is another recognition of an emotionally suppressed woman genius: her poetry must suffer from translation, but both French and English are quoted, and the English translation is good:

"Your voice, which still I hear in memory's trance,
Was the cruellest iron and heaviest of my chains,
And in the inferno of my dungeon pains,
I was often stung to say what I had best
Have kept within the prison of my breast,
While other words that came remained unspoken,
'Twas thus I kept my martyrdom unbroken."

The style of *Marguerite of Navarre* could be improved by a less obvious pandering to the "average reader." What the ordinary reader wants is surely a simple style, not a "told to the children" attitude expressed in poor language. Indeed, their style cramps the reader's enjoyment of these studies which recognize genius: but for which recognition *The Life and Eager Death of Emily Brontë* and *Marguerite of Navarre* must—at least comparatively—be worth while.

George R. Preedy, the famous historical novelist, has retold the intensely human story of Mary Wollstonecraft's character and destiny in what may be described as his first venture in straight biography, the author filling in various lacunae and concentrating upon the sad irony of the sensitive, free-thinking, ambitious, proud, idealistic Mary's lapse into a deceptive passion.

This Shining Woman, Collins, 12s. 6d., is more arresting and convincing than many novels, although its chief interest for us is the association of its subject with Shelley, whose marriage with her daughter Mary, after a passionate and restless wooing, is more fully described in the romantic biographical novel *Eaglefeather* by Catherine I. Dodd, published a few years ago, which carries the romantic story, beginning with Mary Wollstonecraft, further into the life of Shelley and Byron than George Preedy is able to venture.

The Royal Air Force College, Cranwell, is fortunate in having as its Professor of English, Mr. Rupert de la Bère, for he shows that he is a very learned literary man with a pleasant humour in his *John Heywood, Entertainer* (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.), in which he gives a lively account of the life and work of Henry VIII's dramatist, " Heywood with the mad mery wit, citizen and stacyoner of London, and oon of the Kynges servauntes." An analysis of six undoubted plays of this notable " civis Londiniensis " is followed by a faithful text of four of them, which Mr. de la Bère suggests have an intrinsic modern interest, as well as indicating what Elizabethan audiences could endure, perhaps with pleasure. Friend of Sir Thomas More, Heywood was a pious churchman as well as a wit, escaping hanging " with hys mirth " for denying the King's supremacy, Henry being graciously persuaded that a man that wrote so pleasant and harmless verses could not have a harmful conceit against his proceedings.

An interesting new experiment in translation from the Greek is seen in Professor Meredith's renderings of the Hecuba, Heracles, Andromache and Orestes published in one volume by George Allen & Unwin. Hugh Owen Meredith has been Professor of Economics at Queen's University, Belfast, since 1911, but he has also always been a keen student of the classics, and since 1922 he has interested himself in amateur theatricals. This brought him to the Greek plays and it was then that he made his translations based on his own idea of what is required for the modern theatre and for modern technique.

King John suffers undeserved neglect. Although Shakespeare's work was only in its experimental stage when he wrote this play, the experiment was a good deal more successful than the grudging recognition of critics would have us believe. The style may still be somewhat stiff and starched ; but that does not detract noticeably from the intrinsic value of the play as the first of the great series ending with *Richard III* (for we can hardly count *Henry VIII* in the series)—a fact which has always been realized by Professor John Dover Wilson who, as the greatest living Shakespearean authority, is the editor of the new edition of *King John* published in the Cambridge *New Shakespeare* series, of which he is general editor in conjunction with Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. It is to be hoped that the clear and comprehensive introduction and notes and the reliable exposition of the text will make this volume a standard work, not only in schools but among the general public, many more of whom would be Shakespeare-lovers if they would only take the trouble to start reading him in an attractively produced edition like this.

The Poets' Way, Longman's stout anthology for young people, which we welcomed a few months ago, has been followed by *The Poets' Path* (Parts I and II, 10d., together in cloth, 2s. 6d.), in which Mr. E. W. Parker, M.C., a brave man of action, again shows his appreciation of what is of value in poetry and how young people may be led pleasantly, almost cunningly, up the alluring pathway of a beautiful garden.

In a foreword, Dr. P. Gurrey, of London University, restates the excellent case for the use of poetry in education, pointing out that the " stirring achievements of the past, in action, in thought and in wisdom, and the expression of vivid delight in the best things of all that there is around us—birds and beasts and flowers, sunrise and sunset, the earth, resting under the white light of the moon, starry skies, landscapes, seascapes, and clouds—all *these*, vividly apprehended, have an unknown and deep influence on that more urgent and more difficult : the art of living. And that influence, adapting the mind to more adequate social behaviour, keeping it open to what is good and not blind to what is bad, and making it responsive to what is best in human nature, is absolutely essential for progress. The enlightenment and the creative efforts of the past can never work their effect unless the growing generation is readily receptive to what is worth preserving—and is prevented from becoming dull, dried up, inert, self-satisfied, self-centred, unadventurous."

These rich collections of tales of action and imagination, adventure, and romance, nature poetry, rhymes, lilts and verses for miming and action are gathered together for enjoyment, as well as for class-room work, and are likely to lead the young traveller to explore further into the realms of imagination and heightened reality, and to encourage him to make his own selection of favourite poems, and to begin to compile his own anthology and to make a poetry book of his own (which may contain some of his original work). Then, as we believe with Dr Gurrey, he may begin to regard poetry as a natural and true part of his personal life : thus can he be helped to avoid all those false and insincere poses and attitudes which are so often fostered by his pretending to like poetry or by his trying to give satisfaction because he wishes to be helpful.

Types of Aesthetic Judgment, by E. M. Bartlett, Ph.D. (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.), is a valuable contribution to a vexed subject, and is all the more useful as well as timely by being concerned chiefly with the discussion and examination of present-day concepts and attitudes. Dr. Bartlett is lucid and reasonable and clears away a good deal of Freudian and other rubbish while shrewdly analysing an accumulation of varying statements and theories of æsthetics. We can scarcely agree, however, that it is unlikely that any startlingly new facts are yet to be discovered. We can scarcely realize yet the real basis and range of æsthetics, and certainly alleged modern creative work indicates that æsthetics are scarcely understood and do not yet exercise their proper influence. Many of the present-day authorities disagree with these others. We have Herbert Read thinking that the distinct quality of the artist lies in technical skill, or the ability to express, agreeing with Konrad Fiedler that the artist is not differentiated from other people by any special perceptive faculty enabling him to perceive more or with greater intensity, or endowing his eye with any special power of selecting, collecting, transforming, ennobling or illuminating. Contrast this with Shelley's definite statement regarding creative movement in his *Defence of Poetry*—" poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure." And Delacroix remarked that " If I am not agitated like a serpent in the hands of a Pythoness, I am cold. This must be recognized and accepted and it is a great happiness. Any good work I have done has been done thus."

It must be that the impulsive experience of the artist is different from the ordinary æsthetic experience of the layman. The latter sees, and maybe enjoys, his sunset or some other arresting aspect of beauty, but he does not actually experience or remember it as something more than a thing seen and done with, whereas the artist, as Mozart said, " gets heated," and has a creative experience and reaction, conscious and continuous, and that in spite of himself or any definite and practical uses for that experience, uninfluenced and undeterred by such theories as Lascelles Abercrombie's that no one would build a bridge if there were no one to go over it. But the problem of creative art and of constructive criticism is a very big one, and Dr. Bartlett's attempt to deal with it sanely and fundamentally may be welcomed, not as an entire *fait accompli*, but as the promise of something further to be done in perhaps the greatest field now left for human experience and elucidation.

Since *Death of a Hero* we have preferred Richard Aldington as poet rather than as novelist. *Very Heaven* (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.) accenuates this partiality. His unpleasant young man who expected everything and gave little is presumably intended to represent the selfishness, amounting to caddishness, of a section of the younger generation. Certainly he did not find that " to be young was very heaven " except when experiencing certain too facile indulgences. Perhaps Mr. Aldington is cynical and satirical—we trust he is not biographical.

Atlantic Crossing, by G. Wilson Knight (Dent, 10s. 6d.), is a unique book, " combining autobiography, a philosophy of life, a transatlantic journey and a love-story," and no better symbol than the great ship voyaging Atlantic seas could have been chosen to represent it. The author is " voyaging strange seas of thought, alone," but not quite alone, for although many readers will enjoy the love-story and skip the philosophy, others plunge deep into the philosophy and Christian meditation, ignoring the love-story, and others, again, enjoy the reminiscences of Eastern adventure, the vivid travel-impressions sketched with superb artistry, there will be a few, Dallas Kenmare writes, who cannot fail immediately to apprehend the book's true significance, realizing that in his latest work, an almost inevitable corollary to *The Christian Renaissance*, Mr. Wilson Knight expands and enlarges on the ideas dealt with mainly in the last three chapters of that book, here frankly facing the difficulties encountered at every turn when considering the multitudinous implications of the Eros-Agapé " dualism " in relation to actual life, and the attempt to bring about a happy union between the Eros-principle in human life and the central ideas of Christianity. Actually, as Mr. Knight clearly proves, the conception of a dualism is fundamentally false, and due to a profound misunderstanding of both human love (Eros) and Christian love (agapé). Passionate love, involving the entire being of the lover, is close to the love of the saint and the poet, and is possibly for many the only vivid experience of divinity. Browning, best perhaps of all poets, knew this when he wrote :

> God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
> Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
> One to show a woman when he loves her !

This passion needs only to be understood, sanctified, and revered for infinite sources of power to be released. Our present darkened consciousness receives intimations of human love with at best embarrassment, at worst shame, or derision. Until that peculiarly offensive form of blasphemy ceases there will be no true progress. This stumbling-block especially Mr. Wilson Knight would remove ; he would also awaken us to an awareness of innumerable complex social, economic, national and international problems, the vital significance of poetry, the necessity for imaginative interpretation in our approach to literature, and the urgent need for a revitalized Christian church. Jesus came that we might " have life, and have it more abundantly," but there are few as yet with any true life-consciousness, few who are awake to its meaning and glory, least of all, it would too often seem, those who preach the Word of God and proclaim the Gospel of Christ. Something they have destroyed in their search for God: surely it is the Eros, the great life-principle without which there can be no creation, physical or mental. Basic symbolisms, suggesting air, light, fire, water, are the foundations of a book of unusual brilliance, prophetic power, and an importance it would be impossible to overestimate.

Assorted Snobs, by Jane O'Ryan (Charles Leon Tumasel, New York), contains many witty poems, and one entitled " The Tenor " strikes one as particularly well wrought. There is room for verse of the quality and incisive wit displayed in this little volume which bears the dedication " To My Father," who is Major-General John F. O'Ryan, the most distinguished fighting General of the United States Army. He is President of " The Ypres League " in America.

"THE ASCENT OF F6"

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

DEAR SIR,—Since you published " A Note on the New Auden," written by me, perhaps you will allow me to add a note to my Note. I wrote chiefly about Mr. Auden's new collection of poems *Look, Stranger!* and only alluded once to *The Ascent of* F6, which I had read but not seen, for it had not then been performed. It has since enjoyed a long run at the Mercury Theatre. I think this is a great advance on *The Dog Beneath the Skin*. Better production helped, but the credit is really due to the joint authors, Messrs. Auden and Isherwood. They have written a poetic tragedy that not only contains admirable poetry (*The Dog* contained that too) but is good as a play, as entertainment. The book does not give a correct idea of the acted play at all, for the difficult and disjointed last scene has been cut drastically, and wisely. I began to think that I must have been mistaken about *The Dog Beneath the Skin* until the interlude " Dance, John," reminded me. This ought to have been left out.

But the reader will judge for himself if, as I hope, *The Ascent of* F6 is still running when this appears, and if, as I hope, he buys a ticket.

Yours etc., LAURENCE WHISTLER.

London will have during the Coronation period two distinctive Shakesperean productions—the Old Vic's resonant, majestic *Henry V* and the superb, gorgeous, rollicking *Taming of the Shrew* at the New Theatre. Long may such splendid, vigorous stagecraft continue to attract crowded audiences!

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The entries were neither so numerous nor so good in quality as on the last occasion, although the remark as to quality does not apply to the authors chosen for the awards.

These are made to: I. SUTHERLAND GROOM, VIOLET RAWNSLEY, JANET URQUHART and R. G. DUFF. Mr. Duff's poem is remarkable for a certain originality.

Amongst those *Highly Commended*, especial mention must be made of Elizabeth Alden and Brenda F. Skene.

HIGHLY COMMENDED.

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
N. K. Cruickshank, Stoke-by-Clare;
H. Escott, Bradford;
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport, Mon.;
R. McKie, Hove;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W.

COMMENDED.

Vera Arlett, Worthing;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford;
Rosa A. Berry, Hucclecote;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston;
Cloudrider, Budapest;
Capel Hall, Hove;
A. Lawry, Broadstairs;
Phyllis Lubbock, Eastbourne;
N. Lucas, Ramsbury, Wilts.;
Josephine May, Trimley St. Mary;
Enid W. Mark, Purley;
Edith Melbourne, Maidstone;
A. Nicolaeff, London, W.;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Marguerite Pollard, Oxford;
Indreni Savendarayagam, Colombo;
Arthur Lynnford Smith, London, W.;
Stanley Stokes, Exeter;
B.A.S., Frinton;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark;
Mary E. Wise, Brecon.

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before June 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

It is unfortunately necessary to remind some contributors that poems must be written on one side of the paper only and that each poem must bear the full name and address of the writer.

We consider sympathetically poems from our Indian colleagues and wish to associate ourselves with the great revival of literature, especially poetry, which we are assured is taking place in the great sub-continent. It should lead to an immense extension of The Poetry Society beyond our flourishing groups in Hyderabad-Deccan and Calcutta, fulfilling actively and effectively the basic objects of this unique fellowship. Characteristic of this revival and of the serious work in English verse now being done are the two appended poems by a young Indian poet in the early twenties, Sardar Mansingh, a member of a distinguished family, as the title Sardar (Lord) suggests, and a graduate of Bombay University:

A Modern Omar

I care not for
Expensive dress
Nor precious gems—
I must confess
Money itself
Means nought to me.
All that I ask
Is just to be
Among the flowers
Beside the brook,
With Omar's jug
Some happy book.
My sole desire
(Just common sense)
That the book be small
And the jug immense.

TO YOU

Dear friend, I pray thee, if thou wouldst be proving
Thy strong regard for me,
Make me no vows. Lip service is not loving,
Let thy faith speak for thee.

Swear not to me that nothing can divide us—
Such oaths do little mean.
But when distrust and envy creep beside us
Let them not come between.

Say not to me the depths of thy devotion
Are deeper than the sea;
But watch, lest doubt or some unkind emotion,
Embitter them for me.

Vow not to love me ever and for ever,
Words are such idle things;
But when we differ in opinion, never
Hurt me by petty stings.

If all the little proofs of trust are heeded,
If thou art always kind,
No sacrifice, no promise will be needed
To satisfy my mind.

Edna Davis Romig, poet and professor of English in the University of Colorado, attempts to define Poetry:

"The definition of poetry which I give my university course in Verse Technique is not the one I should give my son, in whom I wish to stir a vital love for great poetry. To him I should give no definition—only abundant proof in lilting lines, in witty and realistic portraiture, in dramatic presentation. I should want him to discover that poetry is written not for parade or pomp or propaganda but out of some impetus rarely understood by the poet, even though the method and ultimate effect be consciously striven for. The qualities that make life rich and varied are the qualities that make poetry rich and varied.

"The more of human experience surcharged with that spiritual quality we consider man's and not the beast's, the greater the dramatic energy that the poet comprehends, the greater I think is his poetry. It may be the lot of most of us who read poetry for recreation, for intellectual and ethical growth, for love or curiosity, to sound only a chord, touch an occasional overtone, trace a thin sketch. Why we do it we do not know. Perhaps it is our quest for the living canvas, the sweeping symphony, the complete and cogent drama forever out of reach."

A vivid reconstruction by Arthur Hood of the dramatic story of David and Bathsheba was presented at the Arts Theatre on April 8th by Mr. Richard Cuthbert and Miss Nancy Bayne (in the title roles) and an accomplished company, including an admirable new character, lightly, deftly played, in Thatis, and a passionate sister of Uriah. The setting of the episodes was rich and colourful, atmospherically linked by the sonorous rendering of authentic Hebrew melodies and culminating in a dignified and poignant final scene, which rounded off the tragedy of David's illicit love and resisted the temptation to minimise it by the restoration through Solomon or to aggravate it by the death of Absolom.

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—One of the poems in the March—April issue remains in my memory as follows, but it does not seem really correct? Have I confused its profound message?

THE TICKING IN THE NIGHT.

What is this tick, ticking?
It is only the ticking of your bed, old Maid.
Never heed it,
It is only the ticking of your old, old bed.

Oh, but it is scratching
Scratching all the night,
Scratching, scratching every horrid minute
Of the hours of my night.

Yes, perhaps it is a rent
Tearing in the ticking,
Your old, old tick
Of darning and of mending
Of drear labour and discomfort.

You are sick, old Maid, and weary
Of overlong living,
And fearful
Of new debts pressing in upon you
And duns pushing on you.

The bed is still;
There is not a quiver or a breath in the old Maid.
She is silent and still,
She is dead on the old ticking.
Poor old maid, waiting for her coffin,
So silent and still,
She is a weary sleeper
On the old rent ticking,
In that drear room.

ARTHUR HOOD.

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—I am happy to become a member of The Poetry Society, because THE POETRY REVIEW and the Society were recommended to me by the recent references to your periodical by Miss Edith Sitwell in the *Sunday Times*, for whom, apart from these excursions and alarms, I have a considerable respect.

These references reminded me of Cardinal Newman's immortal phrase: "They cannot afford to be fair."

For me there is no mystery in poetry as uttered or written. A poet does not put forth enigmas. His work must partake of the clarity of light itself.

Mystery, indeed, there is, which lies in how, why and whence beauty and truth come at times to one who has the poetic gift, and who is capable, by reason of much study of form, rhythm, *et cetera*.

The ineffectives cover their weakness by making written "poetry" complicated, and by declaring that one must have some esoteric quality in order to appreciate what they call poetry or what in fact is poetry. Thus poetry perished in Byzantium.

Poetry is the highest form of human expression, and is, therefore, in essence, for the wayfaring man, his own language in perfect form and enriched by harmony. What the ineffectives fail to comprehend is that simplicity is infinitely complex, and that to become great one must become as a little child.

Never, perhaps, in the world's history was the beneficent influence of high literary creative labour more necessary. The writer who refuses to compromise in the matter of truth and beauty must be sustained in his struggle, or the future will be bleak and terrible. Each age must have those who honourably minister to its mind. As Aeschylus wrote in his *Prometheus Bound*: "Words themselves are the physicians of a mind diseased." This translation is literal.

Hove, 8th March, 1937. HERBERT MOORE PIM.

MR. JOHN DRINKWATER

The sudden death of John Drinkwater when he was apparently at his prime and had become the unofficial laureate of great occasions, makes a gap in our little world of poetic activities. Mr. Drinkwater will be the more missed because he actually touched life at many angles, and instead of the seclusion of the poet, he enjoyed the publicity of the man of affairs, and was a *persona grata* in many spheres. His newspaper obituaries recognized this in describing him as a "representative Englishman," and in dealing more fully with his career as an actor and dramatist than with his reputation as a poet, which in some quarters was unexpectedly depreciated. Certainly he left no great volume of poetry, in fact considering the length of his literary life and reputation his output in verse is really small, but will be read and remembered with pleasure and gratification when the plays on which his public popularity was based are forgotten. He was a playwright before *Abraham Lincoln* although his play in verse *Cophetua*, and *Rebellion*, a play in three acts published in 1914, are neglected now, and his Cromwell series of finely conceived and executed dramatic poems and lyrics, published in 1913, does not receive the attention it deserves. Approaching the maturity of his powers and developing a high seriousness which, however, never set him apart from his fellow men, a greater "Cromwell" might have been expected from him, with still finer treatment of the heroic scene, for his own lines seem to be true of himself:

> "Life and fierce life and life alone
> Here upon earth I seek and claim,
> Till my proud flesh again is thrown
> To sea and wind and flame."

Equally descriptive of himself and his work is another quatrain:

> "I saw history in a poet's song,
> In a river reach and a gallows-hill,
> In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong,
> In a crown of thorns, in a daffodil."

We cannot understand why Drinkwater's lyrics, save a few used by reciters, have been overlaid by modernity that is neither English nor musical, for Drinkwater was essentially an English lyric poet, with a serene and austere dignity, beauty, music, cleanliness, delicacy, and frequently vision, and above all the capacity for describing the loveliness and worthiness of the English scene, yet he is not found in some representative contemporary anthologies such as *The Golden Treasury of Modern Lyrics*, and the *Chilswell Book of English Poetry*, where there is more reason for his being found than for some of the contemporary poets who figure therein.

It is fitting that this stalwart singer of the Midlands, of the Gloucester plains and Cotswolds, should have been laid to rest in a Midland churchyard, although the London scene fascinated him:

"I turn to sleep, content that from my sires
I draw the blood of England's midmost shires."

Drinkwater was an amiable yet discerning critic and public appreciator of poetry and an enthusiastic advocate of the reading of it. We shall remember him as a sonorous, dignified reader who respected both form and content. This country missed what the United States enjoyed two years ago,—a broadcast reading for the Columbia Corporation of Keats' "Nightingale," from the room in which that deathless poem was written and within sight of the tree frequented by the immortal bird.

The Council of the Poetry Society have placed on record:

> "a resolution of deep regret and sincere condolence with Mrs. Drinkwater at the death of Mr. John Drinkwater, whom they greatly admired as a poet in the best tradition of English poetry, and a fervent lover of the English countryside, and the kindly discriminating, penetrative critic of literature, who had given great encouragement to the reading and speaking of verse and other uses of poetry, and had been a fine exponent of the art of vocal expression. They deplore his loss and respect his memory and feel sure that his work and influence will survive."

At the appropriate memorial service at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, the Poetry Society was represented by Mr. E. Vandermere Fleming, C.B., and the Secretary of the Society, who also represented the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW.

THE LATE EDWIN FAULKNER

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—I read with great interest in THE POETRY REVIEW, J. Marion Soper's note on Edwin Faulkner. I had the privilege of Edwin Faulkner's friendship, although his living in Devon and my living in London made it a friendship of the written rather than of the spoken word. Nevertheless, both my wife and I were so attracted by his witty and charming personality that for some years past we have made a point of spending part of our summer holiday in Devon in order to meet him either on a visit to us at Babbacombe or in Exeter, where he used to come in from Woodbury to meet us. On these latter occasions we usually had a joint causerie at the house of our common and his very old friend and colleague, C. J. Arnell.

Edwin Faulkner was to us the perfect cosmopolitan man of letters, of an exquisite polish and a rare old-world courtesy. He was exactly what one could imagine the principal figure in the broadcast series "The Table under the Tree," to have been, and when listening in to Wilfred le Rooke, one might in very truth be hearing Edwin Faulkner speak,—the tone of voice and the general charm are the same. Nevertheless, I would hardly agree that there was nothing of the cynic in Faulkner; in my opinion there was, but so softened by kindliness and tolerance as to be scarcely, if at all, apparent. Indeed, his tolerance was amazing, and, backed, as it was, by scholarship, wide reading, and experience of affairs, disconcerting if one was trying to labour a pet theory.

His collected poems will be eagerly looked forward to by many, especially as his literary executor is Mr. C. J. Arnell, a friend and fellow worker not only of many years, but also a friend through a common love for and devoted service to the Muse.

Yours faithfully,
Blackheath, S.E. E. B. W. Chappelow, M.R.A.S., F.S.R.A.

The Poetry Society's Gold Medals for Verse Speaking: A recital by competitors for the Lady Margaret Gold Medal and candidates for The Poetry Society's Gold Medal for verse-speaking was held on February 20th. Mr. Guy Pertwee, V.P., awarded the Lady Margaret Medal to Miss Delphine Petters (London, W.), and the Gold Medal to Miss Mary Jameson (London, S.E.). Mr. Pertwee said that the standard of the Lady Margaret was very high, and it was a keen and close competition ; it was Miss Petters' very real power of arresting interest, and sense of music and breadth, which gained her the Medal. The Gold Medal candidates did not reach the level of past years, but he was awarding a medal to Miss Jameson for her sincere and well balanced renderings. It was extremely pleasant to attend an audition which he was able to hear so consistently well, the candidates being, on the whole, entirely audible, although in some cases their final consonants were wasted on the desert air. A good imaginative spirit animated their work, showing excellent poem sense and production, and a sensitive feeling of restraint, although the tone of some candidates was a little forced. Many of them seemed to have been affected by the unduly sonorous readers we hear on the wireless, and were unnecessarily solemn in their delivery. He considered sonnets rather unsuitable for a Gold Medal recital, except as a possible second choice, as they only allow a very limited scope, and while not presenting any particular difficulty, are too concentrated for any but the most mature speaker. Mr. Pertwee addressed valuable and pertinent personal criticism to each competitor and candidate.

The Swinburne Centenary

The Centenary of the birth of Algernon Charles Swinburne on April 5th was marked by a special meeting at The Poetry Society's rooms. Sir Arnold Wilson, V.P., presided over a crowded audience which included Viscountess Knutsford, the only surviving cousin of Swinburne.

Sir Arnold, in an impressive and whole-hearted address, said he was amazed that the centenary celebrations were not marked by the publication of an authoritative or complete edition of Swinburne's works. Some of Swinburne's MSS. had been in private hands, unpublished over the lapse of some fifty years, and they should be brought into review before they were hidden for ever. Some of his best publications will not be known to us unless some public spirited person could induce those who now hold them to give them to the world. Many people considered Swinburne's works unsuitable for publication, but public taste is changing. Ruskin regarded the most daring and amorous of Swinburne's poems as something very great —the most truthful appreciation that has ever been written. Ruskin proclaimed Swinburne to be infinitely beyond him in honour and power. He immediately swept the small moralists away before him as a torrent does a pebble. Gosse said of a certain work, " How much better is it than anything I could do, but how different from anything I would do."

Sir Arnold introduced various appreciations of Swinburne by quoting MacTaggart, who declared that " Swinburne was swimming in a river of opinion, generally against the tide."

Swinburne had novel poetic value as well as poetic power. He was so much the poet, in the narrowest and the profoundest sense of the term ; he had the richest elements of imagination. All those at the meeting were doing themselves honour as well as Swinburne, by being there, and commemorating the centenary of the birth of one who might be justly described as the greatest English lyric poet. Sir Arnold read from a masterly article on Swinburne by Mr. Randolph Hughes, which will appear in the June *Nineteenth Century and After*.

Mr. Richard Ainley, Miss Ilma Barnes and Miss Sydney Bush contributed appropriate readings, and Mr. E. H. Viziak and Mr. E. V. Fleming spoke to comprehensive votes of thanks, which the Chairman acknowledged by making a positive reiteration of the importance and essentiality of poetry.

Miss Hala Jean Hammond, whose *I Pray You Lapidary* was reviewed recently, writes from Oklahoma :

> " The articles, both prose and poetry, in THE POETRY REVIEW, are stimulating and characterized by that rare appreciation and understanding of the poetic essence that are given to few. Especially do I find this in the article on Hafiz and Malherbe. We are always pleased when we discover others, and especially others of brilliant minds, holding to and confirming our own theories. I refer to this author's attitude toward the origin of poetry, in the subconsciousness. I think poetry originates *nowhere else*. But the stimulation that the entire contents of the magazine has given me makes me feel that I have positively defrauded myself by having let my subscription lapse as long as I did. It shall not be so again—my soul as certainly demands its ' white hyacinths ' as my body its material sustenance." Will other members and subscribers take heed of Miss Hammond's experience !

BEAUTY VANISHES, BEAUTY PASSES. . . .

AN editor has said that one poem out of every four submitted to him is entitled "Transience." He was probably exaggerating, but it is certainly true that since the first poet first recognized beauty, Omar Khayyám's has been one of the most popular of themes :

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close !
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows !

Shakespeare's sonnets are full of this regret. He tells it in a hundred ways—each perfect in the image it presents—but the same question is behind them all.

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea
Whose action is no stronger than a flower ?

For regret has usually been for the passing of physical beauty, as when Thomas Nashe wrote, in time of pestilence :

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour ;
Brightness falls from the air ;
Queens have died young and fair ;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye. . . .

and de la Mare in his Epitaph,

. . . beauty vanishes ; beauty passes ;
However rare—rare it be ;
And when I crumble, who will remember
This lady of the West Country ?

But poets' regrets have not all been for personal beauty. They have felt the impermanence of beauty in all things, from the song of a bird, to a patch of sunlight on a wall.

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And Summer's lease hath all too short a date :
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd ;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd.

And in many poems these two sources of regret are linked.

Man's impermanence, and the impermanence of things attending him, are seen as examples of the transience in all nature.

Like as the grass that's newly sprung,
Or like a tale that's new begun,
Or like the bird that's here to-day,
Or like the pearlèd dew of May,
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of a swan—
E'en such is man; who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death;
The grass withers, the tale is ended;
The bird is flown, the dew's ascended;
The hour is short, the span is long;
The swan's near death; man's life is done.

Faced with this evanescence of beauty, poets have sought desperately, as Manley Hopkins did, for some means of holding it.

How to kéep—is there ány any, is there none such, nowhere known some, bow or brooch or braid or brace, láce, latch or catch or key to keep
Back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty . . . from vanishing away?

It may be because poets have realized that they can never prevent the passing of loveliness that they have written of it so frequently, that it might be trapped, however imperfectly, in words.

But this has rarely satisfied them completely. Shakespeare may have written to his friend,

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee,

but he knew that even his words could not last for ever;

The cloud-cappt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind.

Not a rack behind. And knowing this, poets have sought some other consolation. Perhaps (is the general feeling of those who have found a partial refuge from regret) perhaps things only have their intensity of beauty *because* they and we are transitory. If we were not to lose them, we might never appreciate their worth. As Siegfried Sassoon has written,

> I love all things that pass: their briefness is
> Music that fades on transient silences. . . .
> A moment in the dawn for Youth's lit face;
> A moment's passion, closing on the cry—
> "O Beauty, born of lovely things that die!"

All we can do, they say with de la Mare, is to value the beauty while it lives, and while we live

> Look thy last on all things lovely,
> Every hour. Let no night
> Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
> Till to delight
> Thou hast paid thy utmost blessing;
> Since that all things thou wouldst praise
> Beauty took from those who loved them
> In other days.

Yet it can be seen that even these consolations are only half consolatory. The impermanence is still impermanence —the beauty is still lost, however we may have valued it while it lasted.

Perhaps Manley Hopkins is one of the few who have felt this agony of regret at losing beauty, and yet arrived at a solution which finally satisfied. It is one which united the two sides of his character—the poet and the priest. "I do know such a place" (he wrote at last)

> Where whatever's prized and passes of us, everything
> that's fresh and fast flying of us . . .
> Never fleets móre, fastened with the tenderest truth
> To its own best being and its loveliness of youth.

"Long before death," he concludes,

> Give beauty back, beauty beauty, beauty, back
> to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver.

This, then, is the religious poet's solution to both problems of impermanence: man dies, and beauty dies, but the spirit of both is eternal.

CLIVE SANSOM.

NYMPH ERRANT

HIS hands were roughened with the work
That kept her by his side :
His ardour, forged in steady coin
Glowed dully, then dissolved unchecked
In flimsy glories as he decked
His lovely fretful bride.

She wore bright stones on colours dim ;
She laughed and teased and cried ;
She healed him with bewildered hands,
And stabbed him with her quivering smile.
He kept her for a little while
Till in his arms she died.

J. URQUHART.

WORLD'S DAWN

I LIE in my boat.
The beach is a pale indication,
The lagoon a grey silk sheet.
Coconut trees criss-cross,
And crane giraffe-like necks,
Or loll their mops
Against a stained-glass east.
The world is soundless
But for the chitter and twitter
And the tiny slappings
Of the water-baby under my keel.
There is a growing luminosity
Of blueness, the rose and the green
Of the stained glass die.
The water turns to lavender,
The beach to pearl.
All around me now is a blue transparency,
A mounting marvel
Of victorious blue light.
I am the centre of it,
I am alone, remote,
At the world's dawn.

S. W. POWELL.

THE RHYTHM OF POE

"Far-roved,
My love is still upon that vanished sphere
That outward to infinity has whirled.

In vain I struggle to forget,
And only
Find I all the more my fate regret.

I am star-free, and should not thus be lonely!
And yet—
The breath of morning to my being clings,
And I am homesick for familiar things."[1]

AND that was Poe, as well as Mr. George Greenway, the young author of these lines from his poem, *The Free Soul.*

And that is every man born of woman. Make him a very sensitive man born of woman and his sense of eternity becomes sharper. And was ever a more sensitive man born than Poe?

Swinburne quickened his sense of eternity constantly by asking every child he met, "Child, what news of Heaven?"

What is the sense of eternity within us?

Well, whatever else it is, it is surely a rhythmical sense, echoing the rhythmical motions of planets and millions of worlds, such as the "rapid Pleiads even, Which were seven," swinging at eternal pace, or in tune with them.

This is the sense, the everlasting and universal sense, that throbs in Poe's sonorous refrains, reminding us, *every one of us*, of vague eternal memories, and haunting us with grim prophecies of the certain time of our slipping away from our little earth—sojourn back into our eternal soul-swing.—Out of the material elements and back again, say some; out of God and back to Him, says His Word, with many thinkers still agreeing.

As souls then ever breathing the breath of eternity we are innately in eternal motion. Poetry, thought Poe, is not poetry unless it always echoes this motion. This is his basis for saying as to the Poetic Principle,

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[1] From "The Free Soul" in *College Verse*, Millsaps College (Jackson, Mississippi, 1925).

> " in regard to Truth, if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience at once the true poetical effect."

What is his harmony? It is man's innate eternal motion. Herein lies the explanation of Poe's being the one American poet who is world-embraced. Herein, too, is the explanation for his universality. Doesn't this make Poe an object of world wonder instead of world pity as so many English and American critics make him? Isn't our stock of pure imaginings recorded in syllables that " bring the eternal note of sadness in "—how Poesque Arnold himself often is!—so low that should pay constant homage at Poe's shrine? What critic of Poe can share at least to a degree in his accomplishment? And doesn't this gift of expressing man's sense of eternity in eternal rhythm presuppose a thinker?

Because Poe conceived of the Poetic Principle as " the human aspiration for supernal beauty," and "the manifestation of the principle always found in elevating excitement of the soul, independent," as he put it, " of the passion which is the intoxication of the heart, or of that truth which is the satisfaction of the reason," and because he concerned himself almost entirely with poetry falling within the limits of the Principle he laid down for himself, is that any ground for assuming that he was not potentially a thinker as to passion and truth in the moral sense?

True it is that he chose not to give expression to moral thinking, save in an occasional poem such as the *Colosseum*, up to the time of his sad, untimely end. Surely his voluntary truth-silence, if I may so put it, is no reason for denying him the capacity to think truth.

Might it not be that Poe's ability to give universal expression to the universal sense of eternity in man is a greater service than to give fresh echoes of the moral truth laid down for poets and for all other thinkers in sublime style by the writers of the Holy Scriptures, and by some of the pagan writers?

Who knows that his relegation of "truth which is the satisfaction of the reason" to a place outside the poetical sphere is not the highest type of genius?

Poe never uttered a dissent from any of the high moral truths of the Scriptures. He merely classed them as out of the range of pure poetry.

All poets know that pure poetry—oh, that it could be defined by poets for all men!—is the basic source of every form of poetical accomplishment. And all poets owe a certain debt to Poe, as one of the high priests of pure poetry among English-speaking races. Perhaps one need not hesitate to rest Poe's case right here.

I like to think, that, though art-controlled, he felt a great obligation to all moral truth and that he compassed it fully to its utmost heights. But his genius dictated that he should peal out only the rhythm of the eternal life. A poet of tone, only tone, Poe. But tone in the sense of the music of all-soul life from the beginning with God or with—who'll venture to state the alternative here?

How does Mr. Brownell know that Poe lacks "moral imagination" merely because he *chose* not to voice it? May he have felt the humility of genius before the masterful voicings of moral imagination of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, Dante, Goethe, Shakespeare and Milton?

A sense of honour drove him to banish such humility—or whatever it was—in favour of the expression of the moral imagination of love, and what an expression it is! echoing down the corridors of time.

Had he lived longer—what are forty years, alas! to such a soul?—who knows but that his humility might have given way further, and might have led to such fresh echoes of the old truth of man as would match to some degree at least the perfection of his eternal-motion music, as I call his best lines?

"Literature is more than an art," says Mr. Brownell.

"Poetical literature is only art," says Poe, weakly paraphrased.

Whoever is right here, this we know, that the world of men speak in his syllables over and over again when they want to express their oneness with eternal motion, which is the music of life hungering for its Source again.

It is too bad that Poe's life was so cursed by inheritance, (ultra-psychologists may leave me here) neglect, and hardship above what he may be held by some to have brought on himself, that his pure imagining could not compass the joyous motions of the eternal soul so clearly shown by children to exist. Surely they have news of a glory Poe might well have allowed even physical pain not to blind him to.

Yet, true indeed it is that children are yet young when they begin to sense " the certain taint of sadness inseparably connected with all higher manifestations of Beauty," as Poe put it in his comment on Bryant's " June." And this sense abides with every man until he dies. All are " homesick for familiar things," as young Mr. Greenway wrote at the age of fifteen.

Can it be that Poe came into our world for his brief sojourn here without any glad news of the eternal shore? Is there an answer to this?

Might the answer be that sadness was to him so pleasurable as to give a sense of the good news of childhood's Heaven after all? Let us think so for our own comfort at least.

I can hardly think that his tones of pleasurable sadness can be enjoyable to children, or that they echo eternal joy. To me Poe's greatest lack is that he has no tones for a child.

This, to my everlasting sorrow, is Hardy's great lack, also. In his well-known search through a long life to find the true way of men, if only he had followed Jesus' counsel to let a little child show him this way, what a different Hardy we might have had!

Poe's failure to ring the bells of Heaven, that Heaven from which children come, was not due to the same simple oversight of Hardy, who it would seem let himself be too often doubt-entranced. No. With Poe it was that he was too easily Beauty-bound, lost completely in its " certain taint of sadness."

However all this perhaps too vague meditation, we may hail Poe as universal singer, and at least, " the least of the immortals," which F. H. W. Myers gladly admits. And I am going to go on hailing him for myself as Reason's potential master, too.

NORMAN C. SCHLICHTER.

VESPER

NOW that these hands, whose once light touch
Made murmurous the trembling viols of ecstasy
Must minister and soothe ; but may not stir :
Now that these lips must cherish ; not inspire :
Now it would seem the kindled flame is spent,
Faded, obscured in ageing cerement,
(Yet wastes, poor wraith, yet wastes, uncomforted)
Here in forlorn Gethsemane I pray
Let not frustration play Iscariot,
And fling to bitter pride a once-fair creed.

I am afraid
This sad unwilling Autumn of my days,
Dilating petty comfort to importances,
Confusing fine content with cheerless apathy,
Will cheap-jack to my poor credulities,
And in an easy market-place convince
By twisted mirror cunningly misplaced,
Familiar line and angle incorrect ;
Ideal—grotesque ; pale disillusion—fair.

The specious chatter nears and terrifies :
Tilt, mirror, tilt ! reverse that I may see
Not life care-cumbered, grey and humourless,
Not love cold-lipped, engrossed, indifferent,
Show me again that distant lane, spring-lit,
Youth pledging youth by the far shining river
In golden, unknowing, uncaring " for-ever "

. . . And let me know the burning vision true ;
The poor reflections, dupe and counterfeit.

MARY ALEXANDER.

ONCE

WHEN I was a toiler in Babylon,
A long time ago—
I used to water the hanging gardens
And watch the princes go
Under the eaves of the oleanders
With golden feet and slow,
And a young princess in the scented petals
With eyes like a yearling doe.

I used to water the hanging gardens
With a beaker on my hip,
And drop by drop in silvery sweetness
Fell from its bronzen lip
Hour by hour in the silken stillness
Before Senaccherib.

ETHEL TALBOT SCHEFFAUER.

HULK ABANDONED

NO Venus rises from the opiate foam
I hear when dozing on some afternoon
Bound to the rock with weed grown rusted chains
That now move only to the harbour swell.

Still I can hear the cold sea winds that blow
In from the spaces I no longer sail
While the white horses fling their sun kissed manes
At Africa where empty deserts gleam.

So, stormbound, sit the old men by the shore
Until the shadows take them one by one
Beyond the thunder and the charm of dreams
When from the void Death's flaming pennons come.

And then no more shall we be bound by chains
But escalade the blue horizon's wall
That cuts with its clean line the clouded sky
Where sail the cities of the faint mirage.

C. WREY GARDINER.

JAMES THOMSON, B.V.

A Study in Poetic Melancholy

JAMES THOMSON, the second poet of that name, is known chiefly as the author of that poem of magnificent despair, "The City of Dreadful Night." And it is indeed a poem that of itself entitles its writer to fame. Other poets before him had written of the depths of despair, but it remained to Thomson to rear a very city of despair, with its sombre mansions, its deserted streets, and its street lamps always burning "amidst the baleful glooms." In it every shade of the black mood of despair is transmuted into some material object in his City of Night. Some brief survey is necessary of the life of this strange man whose face, bearded and melancholy, looks at us from where it is engraved in gilt on the cover of one of the best known selections of his poems.

He was born in 1834, the son of an officer in the Merchant Marine. His mother died when he was eight years old and his father developed some weakness of mind whilst the boy was still young. James was, however, educated to be an army schoolmaster, and actually became an assistant master in a garrison school near Cork when about seventeen years of age. Whilst at this school Thomson met Matilda Weller, the daughter of an armourer sergeant, and for this girl, although she was only fourteen years old, he formed a deep attachment. Here also he met Charles Bradlaugh, then a private soldier, but afterwards to become the famous freethinker.

Some two years after Thomson had first met Matilda Weller he received news of her death, an event which profoundly affected him, and which is often supposed to have set his mind upon those melancholy lines along which it was afterwards to travel. In 1858 verse by Thomson began to appear in various periodicals, particularly in the *National Reformer* of which Bradlaugh was then the editor. These early writings Thomson signed with the pseudonym Bysshe Vanolis, later contracted to "B.V.", which initials are still frequently used to distinguish him from the earlier poet, James Thomson. In 1862, the poet was discharged from the army for a minor breach of discipline, and for the next ten years or so he occupied various positions, but he was by now sinking deeper and deeper into the slough of drunkenness.

In 1874, " The City of Dreadful Night " was printed in the *National Reformer*, and for the first time the poet received some considerable notice. He outlived this event, however, by only eight years, much of which was spent in the depths of melancholy and despair. His death occurred in 1882, hastened by his intemperance.

Poetry could scarcely be more self-revealing than is Thomson's and of him it may truly be said that to study his verse is to study the man and to arrive at the mainsprings of that blackness of mood contained in his verse. Indeed in the proem of " The City of Dreadful Night " he analyses in fine phrases his motive in writing the poem :

Why disinter dead faith from mouldering hidden ?
Why break the seals of mute despair unbidden,
And wail life's discords into careless ears ?

He answers his own question by describing the rage that sometimes seizes one to show truth stripped of all vesture. He writes also, he says, to reach a hand of companionship to others who dwell with him in despair :

Yes, here and there some weary wanderer
In that same city of tremendous night,
Will understand the speech, and feel a stir
Of fellowship in all-disastrous fight ;
" I suffer mute and lonely, yet another
Uplifts his voice to let me know a brother
Travels the same wild paths though out of sight."

After these introductory stanzas, the poet proceeds to build up his " City of Night " with all its imagery of horror and despair. Line by line the picture is completed—the following stanza is one of many such :

Although lamps burn along the silent streets ;
Even when moonlight silvers empty squares
The dark holds countless lanes and close retreats ;
But when the night its sphereless mantle wears
The open spaces yawn with gloom abysmal,
The sombre mansions loom immense and dismal,
The lanes are black as subterranean lairs.

He describes his travel through the City to gaze in turn on the houses where Love, Hope and Faith died in the City of Despair—Love stabbed, Hope starved and Faith poisoned by the foul air.

In Part IV of the poem the metre is changed :

As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert : on the left,
The sun arose and crowned a broad crag-cleft ;
There stopped and burned out black, except a rim,
A bleeding eyeless socket, red and dim ;
Whereon the moon fell suddenly south-west,
And stood above the right-hand cliffs at rest :
Still I strode on austere ;
No hope could have no fear.

This is one of several stanzas in which the opening line and a half and the two closing lines are very nearly the same in each stanza. This poetic device of repetition is here used with great effect.

It is unnecessary to summarise the poem further. It is well known to most and to those who are unfamiliar with it the foregoing short quotations serve to illustrate both its theme and its power.

It is not true to say that Thomson is solely a poet of sadness and despair. Some of his verse is relatively light, such as " Sunday up the River." Small as was the public notice this poem attracted, its appearance in *Fraser's Magazine* remained for many years the most important success the poet was able to attain. The comparative success of this lighter poem may perhaps be some indication that the reason for Thomson's unpopularity was to be found rather in his heavy themes and mood than in lack of poetic power. Two verses from " Sunday up the River " are frequently quoted :

The wine of Love is music,
And the feast of Love is song ;
And when Love sits down to the banquet,
Love sits long :

Sits long and ariseth drunken,
But not with the feast and the wine :
He reeleth with his own heart,
That great rich Vine.

Do not these lines constitute the poet's abundant admission that Love was not finally stabbed in his " City of Dreadful Night " ?

Such lighter verse is, however, the exception, and the most characteristic quality of all Thomson's work is undoubtedly a melancholy or even a despair. When he deserts this main theme, his verse tends to become both slight and imitative, as in " He heard her Sing," which begins :

> We were now in the midmost Maytime, in the
> full green flood of the Spring,
> When the air is sweet all the daytime with
> the blossoms and birds that sing.

One can hear an echo both of Tennyson's " Maud " and of Swinburne in these and other lines of this poem. But as his theme grew heavier so did his touch steadily gain power.

Needless to say, the theme of despair was no new one in poetry. Indeed it would sometimes seem that the emotion of melancholy ranging from the wistful sadness of " Oft in the Stilly Night," through various stages of melancholy, through the hedonistic pessimism of Omar Khayyám to Thomson's profound despair is the most characteristically poetic of all the emotions. The work of the youngest of poets is often saturated with melancholy and the most unpoetic of persons is moved by sadness to feel the draw of some great lines of verse. It is the melancholy of the day's death that makes the sunset a theme to affect every poet that has ever drawn breath. Frequent, therefore, as was the general mood of sadness and despair, it was for Thomson to plumb its deepest depths and to bring new imagery from his powerful imagination with which to communicate it.

How was it that the bent of his mind should be such a despairing one ? Many reasons have been put forward. His mother was said to have been of a melancholic disposition, and the poet himself certainly suffered from insomnia. " Insomnia " is the title of one of his grimmer poems and he refers elsewhere to this disease. His frequent defeat by intemperance in spite of the fight he put up to conquer this weakness doubtless filled him with despair, and the death of his young lover he felt keenly. All these must have had their effect on his mood. Furthermore his religious faith he slowly lost and he had no belief even in the possibility of real progress in human affairs.

> The world rolls round for ever like a mill;
> It grinds out death and life and good and ill;
> It has no purpose, heart or mind or will.

His loss of faith in personal immortality seems to have been a heavy blow to him. In an essay on Heine he sorrowfully refers to that mood which hovers between despair on the one hand and a longing to live as " a lusty lover of this world and life " on the other. This alternation between moods was present in his own nature and we find that all who met him testified to his genial and cheerful personality. His despair showed only in his writings.

I suggest that in these last facts—in his alternation between keen enjoyment of life and a deep despair—we have the key to his personality. He was avid for life and enjoyed company—of this there is no doubt. So avid was he that the foreknowledge of death filled him with gloom. It is not unnatural that those with a tremendous zest for life should most feel the melancholy of the certain knowledge of death, nor is it unnatural that a gradual loss of religious faith should intensify that melancholy.

I will suggest further that he, like many others of us, tried in the gaieties of life to put out of his mind these grisly thoughts of despair which so oppressed him. But real poetry is not written from the shallow surface thoughts of the consciousness—it proceeds from the deepest depths of our mind. And in those depths in Thomson's mind lurked that dark despair which was thus able to saturate his poetry whilst on the surface he remained the genial companion. I throw this out as a theory. It at least explains the apparent contradictions in Thomson's life and similar circumstances may well explain why it is that so much poetry is charged with sadness, even when it is written by young and cheerful persons.

It is interesting to compare Thomson's poetry with the pessimistic tendencies of contemporary verse. I do not think it can with truth be said that Thomson has himself exerted any considerable influence on modern poetry—in his own time he led no school of poets and I doubt if he is read to any great extent to-day. His mood, however, is much the same as that revealed in contemporary poetry although many may think that, if pessimism is to be poetically treated at all, the dignified and sonorous phrasings of Thomson are much to be preferred to the whimperings of many modern poets. I think one may go further and say that the roots beneath the mood are the same.

There is, first of all, the same disbelief in personal immortality. Whilst a poet holds the belief that the woes of this world are to be compensated in a later world, even the horrors of the Great War would not be sufficient to produce a true pessimism. Let such faith completely disappear, however, and life may seem at best to be a laborious climbing to a mountain that is delectable indeed but from which the descent is both speedy and certain. At its worst it may seem to be a series of trivial experiences which are so devoid of any ultimate purpose or meaning that it is scarcely worth rousing oneself to live through them. To Thomson the death-in-life of his "City of Night" was utterly black,—to many modern poets life is utterly trivial,—to both alike it is devoid of purpose. Here then we strike a further root common both to Thomson's despair and to modern pessimism,—the sense that all human effort is in the last resort useless. Give to poetry the inspiration of a lofty purpose for mankind and it is strong,—take that purpose away and all the genius of a Thomson is needed to redeem it from weakness.

It is fitting to close with the stanza with which Thomson concludes his "City of Dreadful Night." In this stanza he himself contrasts the despair of the strong with the despair of the weak. In it one hears the reverberations of that black mood which has not learned the law of nature that new life springs from the death of the old and from that alone—that until the lovely bloom has fallen the fruit cannot form.

> The moving moon and stars from east to west
> Circle before her in the sea of air;
> Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn rest.
> Her subjects often gaze up to her there:
> The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
> The weak new terrors; all, renewed assurance
> And confirmation of the old despair.

WILLIAM WOLFF.

APRIL PHILOSOPHY

IS it enough to find the flowers
Returning at this April time,
To hear the birds from hidden bowers
Extol the Spring in tuneful rhyme—
Watching the wind-borne clouds sweep by
Across a rain-washed April sky?

Is it enough to know and love
All those fair things that live to-day?
To-morrow comes, and Time will prove
That fairest sweets shall fade away:
But I will love this present hour
That lends me leaf and bird and flower.

And yet the secret self shall cling
To thoughts of cheating Time's decay;
To wish for one perennial Spring
Where love shall keep stern Age away,
And Hebe shall renew her youth
Within the springs of changeless truth.

So to the end of human time
Shall man deplore each changing phase—
Resent the stubborn belfry chime
And with vain yearning pass his days.

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

THE BURNING BUSH

THE grass is crisp,
And every bush and tree
Is clearly traced
In frosty filigree.

Slowly the sun,
A flaming scarlet, drops
Through the thin mist,
Behind the elm-tree tops.

And still it falls,
Till at the field's dim edge
It seems to rest
Within the hawthorn hedge.

Fired by the orb
Of a divinity,
In splendour shown,
The burning bush I see.

ELIZABETH F. ALDEN.

THE BATHROOM WINDOW

THE frosted window opens. You can see
A red-gold shower of branches, blown one way
Like hair in the wind—a gold stem glinting through,
Silver birch stem in sunlight. Gold and grey,
The young ash pushes black buds, steadily,
Sturdily up to gold air shot with blue.
Steadily, too, a bird wings through the clearness,
Glossy and black, its beak gold-tipped. The nearness
Of life, of possible singing, catches you
Like a cold whirling wind. Oh, readily
You follow, see unpromised fields, the day
Shining and cool, snowdrops . . . . A door blows to—
You start, pack jugs, bottles and cloths away,
Glimpsing in polished glass the sunlit tree.

MOLLY WALKER.

THE END OF CHILDHOOD

THE daughter speaks :
Thy duties have kept thee from me, beloved mother.
My beloved father is the first thought of thy household,
And the younger children that came after me
Have taken the affection and attention that once was mine.
Every cry of their small musical voices calls thee,
As the gazelle rushes to the spring on a hot day.
I have tried in every way to tell thee
That it is time for love to enter my heart ;
But thou hast been blind to my restlessness.
The fruit on my tree is split with ripeness,
But Fate has not yet blessed me with the harvester.
I have bathed and dressed, and reddened my lips,
And whitened my teeth with the bark of the cocoanut palm.
And when the jasmine blossoms are white,
Pouring their fragrance on the air at sundown,
I pace restlessly on the terrace
With my hair arranged and my cheeks rouged,
While my lips long for someone to kiss.
When the sun goes down and the Muezzin calls to prayer,
They find two sad things :
My heart and my soul that weep for Love.
I have learned to pray, as a man ;
To plead with Allah to send me a loved one.
I care not whether in honour or in sin,
Only that Allah give me someone to love.

Two years have passed since first I desired to tell thee
Of the swelling pain in my heart,
And the bleak sadness of my days.
But I could not yet be certain
Whether I yet deserved a lover,
Or whether it was just my changing from child to woman.
But as I face my mirror with a sigh,
I know that I am now a woman.
The tears run so fast I cannot tell thee all,
For I know that I am over-bold.
But the longing for love drives me to madness ;

And I pass the frontier of control.
I beg of thee in thy Beloved Mother's name,
To speak to my honourable father
That he may give to the humble slave at thy gates
Permission to let all visitors enter
Who may seek to know my beauty.
Tell my beloved father to wait no longer
For jewels and wealth in exchange for me;
For I will take a butcher or tentmaker,
The lowliest beggar, or hardiest thief.
Just so it be a man who knows love for me.
Ah, thou thinkest me mad, my gentle mother.
But my heart could not wait longer
To tell thee of my wild desire.
I was contented in thine arms when they held me,
And thy sweet words enchanted me.
But in the ashes of thy neglect,
The need for the flame of love has possessed me.

The Mother speaks:
Oh, Little Idol of my dreams and courage of my youth,
Thou, Father Time of the Night
Who took even my sleeping hours to tend thee;
Through tears and sorrow, and sunshine and laughter,
I have watched my beautiful rose bloom.
And now the wild wind of evil
Seeks to blow away her velvet petals.
I have seen the rouge on thy cheeks,
And thy young breasts full beneath thy garments.
But thou art only fourteen,
And the dream of love has come to thee too soon.
Ah, let me give thee wisdom to save thee bitterness.
Keep thyself free from the caresses of men;
For the time will come when a husband
Shall buy thee with an exchange of jewels.
Then through several weeks of honeymoon,
While thy wedding is being completed,
Thou shalt have thy full measure of caresses.
May Fate make him kind to thee.

But, if Fate guide to thee the wrong man,
He will be brutal and unfaithful,
And make thee a slave to cook and wash.
He will soon tire of thee and seek another wife;
And thou shalt be no longer the favourite of his dreams.
Those things are all in the mystery of life,
That keeps us ever hoping and wandering on.
So thou, who art but a child,
Do not try to rush ahead of time.
Thy age is still so tender.
When thou art thirty thou shalt have a village
Of small ones running behind thee.
Regret and tiredness shall fall upon thee;
But then it will be too late.

The Daughter speaks:
In the glory of the sword the swordsman dies,
And carries his glory with him.
And in the flame of passion lovers burn.
Demon or angel may take their souls
But can never take their love.
I know not whether in hate or love the ocean rises
And takes all in its sight.
But I am willing to take the consequences,
Whether, of the two delights, mine be love or hate.

MOHAMED ALI.

GLASS

O GOD, who madest glass—
For in the glass we see
Thy mysteries divine,
And in the glass we drink
Thy sacrament of wine—
Let that glass never be
Darkened, wherein I see
Thy love, my insufficiency!

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

THE FIELDS

IN the brown fields the naked Man up stands.
Heavily rear the dark trees from the dust
And their short shadows cling about their feet.
Vertical down the ancient sunlight roars
Though into it the dreaming fountains gesture,
Their suppliant, artificial fingers raise—
Helpless and fair they are sucked up to drought,
And birds all day crowd silent, beaks agape.
The naked Giant leans into the sky,
Feet, thigh, breast, belly surge into the sun ;
The myriad corn in sybillant duty leaps
In vassalage up upon his every side
And vertical his burning laughter flies.
It rockets on the hard and fiery sky,
On us descends in unrelenting weight,
A reverbatory burden, swift again.
The eyes close aching on his sickle's glare.
Vertical summer towers in the fields.

But the low Winter lays upon the hills
Her unloosed breasts, pale, in unbreathing sleep.
From her great limbs, mute lying on the earth,
Flows silence out. And peace. She is not roused :
All the long horizontals of the rain,
The secret horizontals of the snow,
The wind's wide angles and the sun's descent
Mould her eternity. She is removed
And calls the colour from transparent blade,
Valley and grove. They turn without a sigh
And take with her her drained and carven sleep.
Level and grey, the mist shrouds hollows up.
Her rivers run their equal course unseen,
Small trails mark famished passages in snow
And the slow ribbons of wild geese go by,
Hemming, unheard, the silence with their cries.
. . . Only sometimes, in music, the ice rings.
Deep and immobile, Winter clasps the fields.

E. RADCLIFFE BINNINGTON.

THE TYRRHENI

(*An historical comparison between the Etruscans and the Normans*)

I

WOE was that village, Rome,
when ye gloomy Tyrrheni came,—
came in your slave-long galleys
over the southward wave,
with hulls stare-yawing like Gorgons,
and barter and purple from Tyre,
ay, purple, fell purpose from Tyre,
that strange land of heat and beards.
(Here, son, there are mountains breasting the sea,
with dim pines of Lebanon murmurous down,
and slim ships waiting below.)

II

Dark were the days when ye came,
no Lord from your fury delivered us,—
no women sewed linen in stately hues,
no grand, figured homespun of Bayeux
made all men's eyes dream in telling your coming :
but fen-fowl, an omen, rose as ye holloa'd,
grounding your prows in wild Ostian foam,
and arrows of bronze in the fight through the forests
sped, as at Senlac—
and lo ! a bard went before
singing a song of Homer before Troy,
a lay of Agamemnon and his knights.

III

Ay, ye triumphed, O straight-nosed !
Some ruse of Punic faith
gave ye the gates of the City,
even all her opulent swinelands,
and Doomsday, monkhood, beadsmen, came to Rome.

IV

Great Virgil, poet of Empire, would gloss her shame,—
she who was now all the light and the mirth in the world,
so wove he a legend around that year,
painted a scented passion of a night—

the yarn of a rover just up from the sea,
a love-lorn Queen at her window over the bay :
it could be nothing more, he said,
half-fearing, remembering Carthage,
the last of Hannibal's elephants
in Bruttium, at the bitter end,
wheezing in the rain . . .

No reflection is intended on Virgil. I think it is rather the historical satire of the contrast between romantic myth and hard historical fact.

V

We lived in huts of grass and flowers
open unto the sky
where all the winds of heaven blew :
ye supped in your goodly keeps and halls,
ye made us build them, chained in gangs—
whip-wealed, we scarce could stir the cruel stones,
but there, by haven, river, hill, they lour.
A murrain on ye, stern priest-princes,
that chased while we did slave—
and swore in hateful alien tongue
like the lords of Egypt's lands !
When will that rue-red day sure dawn—
dauntless the serf arise—
two centuries of feasting and fair court
have made ye careless, and ripe for the fall ?
And Latium be free ! be free !
and Latium be free !
the manly Roman speech sound high again.
Eheu, go, go, and bury your dead
with pomp and hollow wind,
and, as in a Pharaoh's funeral,
tomb-trinkets strow, and charms,
masks, and the rites of death.

VI

Yet ere they went, O Romans, see !
like to Troy's walls that rose up to a song,
so to a new, a strange song, lo !
the unconquerable Capitol on yon hill,

like an April moon in her brightness,
in the wonder their craftsmen wrought ere they fled,
in a flame of wizardry ere their cruse went dark!
For out of the square porch of Egypt,
the age-long horizons of Karnak,
a new thing, a great thing—
behold it, ye Romans, uprising
all to the glory of Zeus
in curve after curve to perfection,
aspiring round arches in stone!

VII

Dear God! I could believe—nay, swear—
our Gothic masons worked again!
When, ere the Normans died,
God made this firm-set Ely or York tower,
foursquare to the English skies, like a Roman king,
burst at a touch into engrailed flower,
transition into grace—
pier, oriel, counterpoint arch,
and all the bird-beauty of spires,
holy, holy, holy, sprung of the spirit,
the lasting glory of Christ.

VIII

Barbarous, new-fangled style!
So said the Greeks and so Raphael,
Greeks coming smooth from old Athens
of Minos and Pharaoh,
marble and friezes and cool-lying lintels
of a small temple on a blue strait
reflecting great Egypt,
Greeks raising their hands at the soaring brute grandeur
of arches, in once savage lands.
And Raphael, from Italian plains
citied with churches and fairs,
palaces wherein the walls did glow
gold with the spiritual glory of Greece, but clothed,
the home of all art, though riven with war,
Dante's Italy, olive-crowned: so, Raphael,

leaving the ancient and politer ways
for all the gloom of cathedralic Gaul—
" Anathema ! Anathema ! " he sware,
for in his ears
the unearthly music rang
of multitudinous stone hands
reaching in prayer to heaven.

IX

O fateful day ! when up through some Cinque port,
or by the blossomed slopes from Tarquin's wharves ye came,
with gonfanons and plumes and haughty start of fife,
clad in all the gold glory of your arms !
Crying and breathing a few dark words,
a few much-meaning words—
Oyez ! your lips did frame them, long since dead,
lips of your lovers, and martyrs, and minstrels.
And long-scrolled yellowed laws ye gave,
read out in your high Parliament
in a strange tongue,
The king it wills ! Le roy le veult !
which even now we say,
echoing down the silvern halls of time.

X

Hail, strangers from the southern wave,
ye bringing bronzy fasces leering in the sun
to rule us with, which now bear round the world
in tawny mould of universal might
consul and king :
even he who leapt—young heart and true !—
out off his tall beaked barque so near the land
and bore aloft that emblem into Britain :
white seas, where now old Dover's walls
rise greyly, and her archered keep, her crown,
looks on the ways of empire dourly,
well mindful of her witless Saxon thralls :
and shadowy her walls, where once the Jew
displayed his wares to eager, childlike eyes,

as did his Punic brethren in a far-off age
when Egypt was the leaven of the world.

The emblems of former subjection are now transformed into the emblems of empire; just as relics of English serfdom under the Normans live on in our modern Constitution, which we have given in our turn to our Empire, though of course with much more true democracy.

XI

Now are the years of languor come,
in Bournemouth as in Baiae,
and all the fountained pleasure-cities
of the cold, couch-rid Romans,
villa on villa the fragrant coasts adown.
Who knows what ancient bay beneath their bowers
one grey dawn went alive with bales and men,
sent vases, vellum, the first lust for art,
up Tiber until Veii and the azured hills.
But gulls bemourn it with their tear-bright wings,
and teem and clamour over buried quays,
lost, lost those swelling sails, those war-shouts high,
the straining, hoary-bearded crews, fear-eyed
at hairy comets, and the floods as wild as night!
There is a honied viol in the court,
a singer fresh from Hellas, or Antioch,
a fair sea, and flowers, and wine. DENNIS HINDE.

RATIONALISATION

OUR lives are dry of love; our suck-brain hearts
Closed from within; with reasoned reckoning
We calculate, we allocate his parts,
We talk of man as if he were a thing.
O pitiful God! look down on my despair
Or send me sleep to set my heart at ease
Against my cruel friends who do not share
This bafflement at life's live mysteries.
But then I am unjust; for they do live
And breathe and are as vigorous as I:
—We are such living beings! Yet meet and give
Each other's smiling claims the frowning lie.
Yet if they're wrong, how have they rational light
For being wrong, I none for being right?

GEORGE HASLAM.

GENEVA

GENEVA stood,
Fronting the lake and fenced with wood,
Fanned by no sound
But sound of water in soft mood,—
Sound but of mild vicissitude,—
Upon the moist, receptive ground ;
Or sound of hail,
Creaming the willing waters in a gale.

Those open hills !
Combed by remote, unthought-of rills,
That pulsing lake,
Those sly waves of a thousand wills,
Dancing like errant daffodils,
Lie calm, Geneva, for our sake ;
Thy peace can be
Of more delight to man than man's to thee !

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

TO Y.A.

JOY-RIDDEN I that saw
In you a loveliness transcending law,
And that diviner awkwardness
Outreaching grace, wherein gods dress
When for a space they keep
Admetus' mortal sheep,
Or court Cassandra on a vine-wrapped hill,
Or, rarer still.
Walk city streets at flowering of the day,
When poets may
The gods in their high comeliness see go,
And wondering know
The wingèd heel, the eye
Acclimatized to wider sweeps of sky,
And shoulders idly stooped, in scornful feigning
Of mortal height, immortal height retaining !

UNA MONK.

THE THOUGHT OF LONELINESS

ONE Autumn day, I stood
And watched the world
The world of light and shade.
As I stood, I felt
The dreadful thought
The thought of loneliness.

The sun shone on the trees
The wind struck my face ;
Yet I was alone.
I had never,
Never in my little life, been alone—
Away from the sun, wind and trees.

I saw
That I could see
The world as another place.

I was not there.
God !
God ! where was I ?
Was I alone ?
Was I lost ?
I could not find my way.
There was no way to find.

A man came
And shouted to me
But I knew, that
He could not reach me—
I was alone.
He was nowhere, nor was I
We were helpless
We could never reach each other
We cried aloud, but we could not hear.
We were alone : but
The trees and sunshine were together.
Could it be true after all
That we were exiles in this place.

I cried all day and night ;
But no one heard.

We can never hear each other,
Nor shall we ever.
We are lost : we are alone,
In a world of light and shade.

DÓMNALL O. CONAILL.

TO A DRYAD

RACE back, for Dawn is glinting through the forest,
Gilding the giant stems of beech and oak ;
Thrust your bare feet into their moss-green slippers,
Fling round your naked limbs this leafy cloak.

At break of day, like all bright dreams, you vanish ;
Then lie entranced within the tree's grey husk
Until again you hear the white owls calling,
And join the ghost-moths flitting through the dusk.

* * *

Forgotten are the savage nights of Winter
When, crouching in your tower, a frightened thing,
Above the crashing of the forest antlers
You heard the mammoth beeches trumpeting.

H. E. HOLLAND.

THE NEGRO

WHEN that dark shape went past
I thought a cloud had cast
Its shadow on the world.
But when I turned and saw
The negro's smiling face,
It seemed the sun had hurled
The darkness from that place.

LAWRENCE W. HOCKEY.

TO ELIZABETH

I THOUGHT I heard
You call, little sister.
I thought I heard
The sweet bird note
Of your clear voice
For so long muted.
And thought
I saw your face
Down-turned to me
As you leant
Over the balustrade.
And that, with finger
At your lips,
With laughing eyes
You motioned me
To follow
Your secret, wayward flight
From the shadowed hall.

And then I thought
I saw you kneeling
In your chair,
With little, freckled nose
Pressed flatly there
Against the icy window pane,
Gazing out to where
The garden and the rowan tree
Shivered naked in the rain.

And as we knelt
So warm and laughing there,
The chilling fog
Crept close about the house,
Pressed near to see
The mocking forms we traced
With our wet fingers
On the misted window pane,
Crept close to stare
At twisted, strange
Hobgoblin shapes.

And when, at last,
I wrote " *Elizabeth* "
With woeful eyes,
And trembling lips,
You watched the wavering
Letters of your name
Run into water,
Drip into nothingness.

And when I would
Have turned with loving words
To comfort you, little sister,
Like a dream
You had gently crept away
With the oblivion
Of your name,
Whilst yet against
The misted window pane
Pressed the cold fog,
Whilst yet the silver
Rowan tree
Trembled naked
In the rain.

O. C. DOUGAN.

LOVE

IF I do sin to love, Thou yet dost Love
As I would love were I made fuel fit
For Thy Love's Fire, which if I cannot prove
Thy Love hath all my lack contained in it.
I ask not any thing ; in this waste land
Of this wild thorn I cannot tell the root.
Was this Thy Crown ? Sure, this hath torn my hand.
I ask not any thing of flower or fruit,
Although in beggared ways I pace apart
Thou tell'st Thy treasures time can never dim ;
When years have bankrupted this barren heart
Will not Thine angels laugh for love of him ?
I trust Thy Fingers in strong mercy furled,
O Love Sufficing, fast about my world.

J. M. HUBBARD.

FOUR-TIME IN ENGLISH VERSE

THERE is not, as far as I know, an English poem in true Four-Time ;—that is with three flicks to the stroke ; for our vocabulary does not run easily in that type of rhythm. We have, however, a few poems in which a combination of Four-Time and Two-Time rhythms may give us a *feeling* of Four-Time. For example :

Thĕ glōry̆ | ŏf thĕ gārdĕn | ĭt ăbīdĕth | nōt ĭn wōrds (*Spans*)
˘ ¯ ˘ ˘ : ˘ ¯ ˘ ˘ : ˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ : ˘ ¯ (*Feet*)

Thĕ Kīng hăs cōme | tŏ mārshăl ŭs | ĭn āll | hĭs prōud | ărrāy (*Spans*)
˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ : ˘ ¯ ˘ ˘ : ˘ ¯ ˘ ¯ : ˘ ¯ (*Feet*)

Here the lines are separated by bars into *Spans of Thought*, and by colons into *Feet of Sound*. The quantities are marked *above* for *Sense : below*, for *Sound* ; in other words, the markings above show where the stresses actually fall (as in ordinary speech) ; while the markings below show where they should fall according to the metrical theory of Feet. It will be noted that Spans and Feet coincide in the second line, but that they cross-draw in the first ; also that Four-Time breaks down into Two-Time in the last span of the first line, and in the first and third of the second line. (But an expert elocutionist, by forcing the quantities, might be able to give us the *illusion* of true Four-Time in both.)

Examination of such cases leads us to the conclusion that the Anglo-Saxon element in our vocabulary tends towards Two-Time, whereas the Classical element tends to slip into Four-Time. Classical Pope noted these tendencies in his gibe : " And ten low words oft creep in one dull line." Pope seems to have missed the vital point that eight of his ten " low words " are strokes, full of individual signification ; also the point that, as he has placed only two flicks among eight strokes, he has failed to give the line that alternation of two " quantities " which would make it rhythmic. (He is aware, however, of the fact that *a succession of strokes will inevitably brake a line ;* as in " When Ajax *strives some rock's vast weight* to throw," where the agglomeration of consonants, or paucity of vowels, slows down the speed of the tongue, especially where repeated sibilants are concerned.) In contrast the line of Tennyson:

"The murmur/of innumerable/bees," (*Spans*)
: : (*Feet*)

illustrates the fact that classical words have a higher percentage of vowels; some have a vowel to every consonant; and so the movement is swifter. Here again is a line in true *Four-Time*, with three flicks to the stroke.

Hence it would be well for the young poet to note, if he wishes to make Four-Time verse, that words of classical origin will give him good service, because they often lend three flicks to the stroke. (At the same time he should note that the higher the proportion of strokes to a line, the higher the content of thought or emotion.)

Then arises the question if it is possible to express a high thought content in Four-Time verse with its small proportion of strokes to flicks, without its varying so often into Two-Time as to spoil the Dominant Rhythm. Here follows an experiment.

Measure : .— . . | .— . . | .— . . | .—
Variation ,— | ,— | ,— | ,— | ,— | ,— | ,—

THE MISSION OF MACHINERY

Victorious machinery viceroyalty of power
Industrial development of avalanche and tower
An armament of tragedy for powers of tooth and claw
A citadel protectionist for policies of law

The scavenger of drudgery and slavery of hand
The enemy of misery that devastates our land
Embodiment of Capital with Labour standing by
In energy and sympathy to bridge us earth and sky
So household toil may dance awheel and leave us breath for song
And musical the cogs may churn the farmyard hours along
As tractors beat the rhythmic time for themes abroad to roam
As field is ploughed and sown and reaped and harvest gathered home

It harnesses the hurricane to grind us ears of wheat
It subjugates the thunderbolt to switch us light and heat
It throttles back the flooding lake to hydraulise a shower
To vaporise a mineral oil or turbinise a power
Electrifies the gridded soil with gospelling rebirth
And frees for us the sunny rays imprisoned in the earth
It ripples o'er the quivering air with voice of man to man
From spacious voids of east or west or round the Polar span
It twins us threads of adamant steel to engineer our rail
And bridges chasms of viewless air to blaze a daring trail
It tunnels out the granitry of prehistoric rocks
To feudalise the curving bays in fealty to docks

It grinds us down	the elements	to build them up	again
Accelerates	the welding links	of evolution's	chain
Creative Force	it stirs the depths	of prediluvian	slime
To give to post-	diluvians	the power the ridge	to climb
Leviathans	for ocean depths	or dragons winged	on high
Till trekking towns	can sail the seas	or fly across	the sky

Machinery	will glorify	the handicraft	of man
In rhythmic skill	and symmetry	a heaven on earth	to plan
Assembling	from simplicities	complexities	of fact
And correlating	thought and word	with will attuned	to act
For communal weal	our energies	in mutual faith	to bind
And dedicate	our services	to suffering	mankind
To conjure dreams	of palaces	and build the body	of dreams
To weave the warp	and woof of life	to spiritual	themes
To fill the world	with humming toil	of melodies	robust
And drum the roar	of symphonies	for Man's Orchestral	Trust

N.B.—Students who wish to follow up such lines of enquiry will find help in my *Elements of English Verse* (Macmillan); also in my articles in The Poetry Review (1935/6). They should note that in Column Verse punctuation marks are not necessary. W. H. Stephens

TERZA-RIMA SONNETS

Author's Note: The terza-rima sonnet [rhyme scheme aba-bcb-cdc-ded-ee, or with the ending -dad-aa] is, of course, an adaptation of the measure immortalized by Dante. The first English use of this form which I have been able to find is that by Sir Philip Sidney, who interpolated two fourteen-line terza-rima songs in his *Arcadia*, written in 1580–81.

Shelley employed this rhyme scheme for the five stanzas of his *Ode to the West Wind* (1819). He wrote no sonnets in this form, however.

In Robert Frost's *West-Running Brook*, published in 1928, one poem, "Acquainted With the Night," has the rhyme scheme aba-bcb-cdc-dad-aa, with the first and last lines identical.

"Invocation," my first sonnet in this form, to describe which I coined the phrase "terza-rima sonnet," was written December 23rd, 1931, when I had knowledge only of Dante's measure and Shelley's stanza.

The Poetry Review was the first magazine to print any of my work in this form—"To English Poetry," in the issue of November, 1932.

The two examples that follow are not part of any sequence.

INVOCATION

O perfect beauty, burn relentlessly
  Within my blood: a furnace make my heart,
A crucible my brain. Thy pity be

Only on purest feeling, highest art!
  All else consume! And let thy wrath's elation
Suffer no dross to be a hidden part

Within the sterling element's creation;
But bid the phoenix of perfection rise
Triumphant from thy ruthless conflagration!

Or, sternest beauty, as the wind denies,
At Monetrey, peace to the cypress tree—
Strains, trims, and whips it till it agonize

With Job's magnificent simplicity,—
O strike and cleanse, exalt and chasten me!

TO A FAMOUS MAN DYING

Come, while the platitudinous fools are sighing,
Let us be frank about this meagre man
Who chose at last the negative of dying.

You call him silent? He blinked the charlatan!
Humble? Before the powerful, demure!
Courageous? When the strong felt not his ban!

Sage? No, not sage, but safe: his words secure
Within the obvious, too thin in thought
To challenge hate. Nor could his calm heart lure

Our love. . . . No vision passionately sought
Could move that pulse deliberate and tame,
Or make those winter-marrowed bones grow hot.

Always he was reliably the same:
Never the mind afire, the heart aflame.

ROBIN LAMPSON.

Berkeley, California.

DIRGE

THE hills are hung with mist,
black water beats the stones
black water tones
keep tryst
with half-light sound.
And I have found
no place
for bed,
nowhere to lay head.
There is no eager face
to turn
to me with gentle call,
no quiet breast
for warmth or rest.
Only the distant burn
runs into bitter waterfall
and the hills, cold
cold, old.

LEONARD CLARK.

THE BROWNING COMPLEX

AT a time when the progress of psychology has made complexes popular, so that the word is used often unthinkingly by the youthful on the tennis court, and in the dance hall—when everything from the most dull to the most frivolous comes under the category of some complex or other—may it not be that there is a poetic complex, and particularly a complex of preoccupation with some particular poet, and even some particular work of a particular poet?

There have been poets for every age, and suitable to many types of mind, since culture waxed and waned, and waxed and waned again—and how it is waning now! Oh, shades of Milton and Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning, why do you not haunt the minds of some of the "Advanced" poets of to-day? But apart from poets of the age, there have been certain divine geniuses whose lamps have never gone out; though the lamps may be, to us, curiously wrought. Milton's lamp was essentially of a seventeenth-century pattern, though its light may light the still more curious atmosphere of the twentieth century, and illuminate eternal problems, the answers to which have been almost lost. Wordsworth and Shelley, with their passion for freedom, in the age of the industrial revolution, have still a message for this day of industrial and economic chaos; while Tennyson's Victorian atmosphere and hard-won faith shine like a beacon in Georgian days.

Robert Browning has been stated to be not a poet who can appeal much to the present age—"so Victorian you know; but nevertheless a great man." One has ample grounds for disputing that epithet of "Victorian" as applied to Browning, considering the word in the sense in which it was meant; for he was far too universal in his range and in his insight into the mediaeval and renaissance mind to be localized as to country or period.

The study of Browning may become so fascinating as to produce a particularly interesting complex, for he had a genius of a different kind from any other poet, at least of more modern times. He may hardly be said, on the whole, to be a poet's poet, in the sense in which Keats, Shelley, and perhaps Swinburne may be so described for the musical beauty of their language, and their utterly poetic thought. Nevertheless he wrote some beautiful lyrics, wonderful poems on art and music, epic poems in rhyme and blank verse, dainty trifles and works of colossal magnitude, and throughout his style is so markedly individual that there has surely nothing else like it been known throughout the whole realm of poetry. Above all, Browning was a philosophical and psychological poet. Much has been written, said and thought about him and his works, some of which have always been accounted problematical. But it may be worth while to consider his work further in these days, when it may almost be said to be out of date, just to prove that it is not, and never can be so.

It is the purpose here to make particular reference to that most problematical of poems, " Sordello," as an illustration of Browning's peculiar mentality, and of his singular penetration into and ability to lucidly describe the mentalities of others. Although Browning's references in this work are often obscure, and his turns of thought often difficult to follow, it seems that it is but necessary to acquire the knack of following him to derive intense enjoyment from the poem. Considering his early age when he wrote it, it is a striking example of an ebullition of genius.

In the first place, when studying " Sordello " it is necessary to remember that Browning had a peculiar aptitude for delving into the " holes and corners of history," as G. K. Chesterton says, in his little book on the poet; and he had the power of making these odd holes and corners as interesting as the better known periods. But the relation of history is not the main purpose of " Sordello," although it has its proper place as a background. The object of the poem is to describe a poet's mental working and finally his failure to do what that giant, Dante, afterwards achieved, both as poet and patriot. Sordello had magnificent opportunities and was evidently a youthful genius, as is shown in the scene where he takes the prize from Eglamor, the popular bard, in the Eisteddfod at Mantua. But it seems that his mind was too complicated, and he had not a steadfast purpose to achieve success.

Such is the bare outline of the story which, with its historical setting, runs into six long books of very beautiful poetry, full of vivid pictures and fragrant flowers of thought; and such is the poem of which Tennyson declared he could understand only the first line and the last. Fortunately, there are people to-day who aver that " Sordello " is not really difficult, and it is up to the lover of great poetry, and, particularly, long epics, to try to explore for himself, with that faith as a very illuminating guiding star.

It is the purpose of this article to make a few quotations and references which may throw a little light on the poem for the benefit of any who may be interested enough to wish to study it. It is, of course, possible to quote only a very few of the significant passages and very beautiful images scattered on every page, but these few must suffice for the present. Naturally, in a work of this nature, the illustrative quotations which may be made fall into various categories, descriptive of scenes and places, of historical facts, of individuals and of mental processes, the latter being, in this case, as before mentioned, the most important.

There is often a difficulty in selecting quotations from Browning, for his sentences are frequently so long and lead into one another so logically that many lines are necessary to make any passage intelligible; in fact there is enough in " Sordello " to fill a volume of annotations.

The first quotation is a purely poetical one, one of many scattered all over Browning's pages, showing that he could be a poet's poet:

"That autumn eve was stilled,
A last remains of sunset dimly burned
O'er the far forests, like a torch flame turned
By the wind back upon its bearer's hand
In one long flare of crimson. As a brand
The woods beneath lay black."

This kind of thing speaks for itself; as does the following typically Browningesque passage in a description of the times:

"Yourselves may spell it yet in chronicles,
Albeit the worm, our busy brother, drills
His sprawling path through letters anciently
Made fine and large to suit some Abbot's eye."

This has some affinity with that strange Garden Fancy, No. 2. "Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis."

A piece of very beautiful, and what one may term architectural poetry, is in the following, reminding one of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and again poet's poëtry:

"A dullish grey-streaked cumbrous font, a group
Round it, each side of it, where'er one sees,
Upholds it—shrinking Caryatides
Of just-tinged marble like Eve's lilied flesh
Beneath her Maker's finger when the fresh
First pulse of life shot brightening the snow.
The font's edge burthens every shoulder, so
They muse upon the ground, eyelids half closed;
Some, with meek arms behind their backs disposed,
Some, crossed above their bosoms, some, to veil
Their eyes, some, propping chin and cheek so pale,
Some, hanging slack an utter helpless length
Dead as a buried vestal whose whole strength
Goes when the grate above shuts heavily.
So dwell these noiseless girls, patient to see,
Like priestesses because of sin impure
Penanced for ever, who resigned endure,
Having that once drunk sweetness to the dregs."

Again in the first book there is a masterly and exquisitely beautiful passage, which might be descriptive of the insight of any poet, and here depicts the mind and soul of the youthful Sordello while at the castle of Goito. The passage is long for a quotation, but is so at the root of the matter, that it lays the foundation for an understanding of Sordello as poet and perceiver of beauty:

"You recognize at once the finer dress
Of flesh that amply lets in loveliness
At eye and ear, while round the rest is furled
(As though she would not trust them with her world)

A veil that shows a sky not near so blue,
And lets but half the sun look fervid through.
How can such love?—like souls on each full-fraught
Discovery brooding, blind at first to aught
Beyond its beauty, till exceeding love
Becomes an aching weight; and, to remove
A curse that haunts such natures—to preclude
Their finding out themselves can work no good
To what they love nor make it very blest
By their endeavour—they are fain invest
The lifeless thing with life from their own soul,
Availing it to purpose, to control,
To dwell distinct and have peculiar joy
And separate interests that they may employ
That beauty fitly for its proper sake.
Nor rest they here; fresh births of beauty wake
Fresh homage, every grade of love is past,
With every mode of loveliness: then cast
Inferior idols off their borrowed crown
Before a coming glory. Up and down
Runs arrowy fire, while earthly forms combine
To throb the secret forth; a touch divine—
And the scaled eyeball owns the mystic rod:
Visibly through His garden walketh God.
So fare they. Now revert. One character
Denotes them through the progress and the stir—
A need to blend with each external charm,
Bury themselves, the whole heart wide and warm,
In something not themselves; they would belong
To what they worship—stronger and more strong
Thus prodigally fed—which gathers shape
And feature, soon imprisons past escape
The votary framed to love and to submit
Nor ask, as passionately he kneels to it,
Whence grew the idol's empery."

So much for the first book, which has portrayed the state of the times in the thirteenth century, with its Italy fermenting with the interminable strife between Guelfs and Ghibellines, the Pope's party and the Emperor's party.

The second book opens with an exquisite piece of nature poetry:

"The woods were long austere with snow; at last
Pink leaflets budded on the beech, and fast
Larches, scattered through pine tree solitudes,
Brightened, as in the slumbrous heart o' the woods
Our buried year, a witch, grew young again
To placid incantations, and that stain

About where from her cauldron, green smoke blent
With those black pines."

And a little further on is a vivid description of the morass, Mincio, near Mantua :

"He advanced,
But warily ; though Mincio leaped no more,
Each foot-fall burst up in the marish-floor
A diamond jet : and if he stopped to pick
Rose lichen, or molest the leeches quick,
And circling blood-worms, minnow, newt or loach
A sudden pond would silently encroach
This way and that."

Then follows the exciting narrative of Sordello beating Eglamor, the well-known minstrel, at his own game. As Eglamor proceeds in his song, Sordello felt that he "could supply each foolish gap and chasm the minstrel left in his enthusiasm," and "the people's frank applause half done," he rushes into the breach "taking the other's names and time and place for his," and by the sheer mastery of his poetry has won the prize before he knows it—"He seemed to shrink into a sleepy cloud," and is carried home to Goito in triumph, crowned as the Bard.

What a fragrant passage is this :

"'Twas a sunrise of blossoming and May.
Beneath a flowering laurel thicket lay
Sordello ; each new sprinkle of white stars
That smell fainter of wine than Massic jars
Dug up at Baiae, when the south wind shed
The ripest, made him happier."

Unfortunately it is impossible to outline all the intricate windings of the story, historical and personal, here. The reader who is interested must follow that out for himself.

Alas, Sordello's muse failed at a critical point, when, as the Poet Laureate of the time, he was called upon to celebrate the arrival of the Ghibelline leader, Taurello Salinguerra. The main point of the story is that he had not the strength of will to carry through his mission as poet and patriot.

"The Body, the Machine for Acting Will,
Had been at the commencement proved unfit ;
That for Reflecting, Demonstrating it,
Mankind—no fitter : was the Will itself
In fault ?"

Sordello was at Goito again ; "a dream is o'er ; and the suspended life begins anew."

"Every spark
Of Mantua life was trodden out ; so dark

The embers, that the Troubadour who sung
Hundreds of songs, forgot, its trick his tongue,
Its craft his brain, how either brought to pass
Singing at all."

He was absorbed by the problem of adjustment between the material and the spiritual, the man-part and the spirit-part—and the consequence was that he excelled in neither. He felt that he

"Could e'en have penetrated to its core
Our mortal mystery, and yet forbore,
Preferred elaborating in the dark
My casual stuff, by any wretched spark
Born of my predecessors, though one stroke
Of mine had brought the flame forth. Mantua's yoke,
My minstrel's trade, was to behold mankind—
My own concernment—just to bring my mind
Behold, just extricate, for my acquist,
Each object suffered stifle in the mist
Which hazard, use and blindness could impose
In their relation to myself."

This gives some clue to the problem, but this very penetrating soliloquy of Sordello's, in which he takes stock of himself, must be read in full to be properly understood.

Finally arose the great object of his life, inspired by Palma, the lady of his love, to divert Taurello Salinguerra, the Ghibelline leader, to the Guelf cause, assist the Pope, and build up a new Roman Empire apart from the Kaiser's power:

"Let us have Rome again. On me it lights
To build up Rome—on me, the first and last;
For such a future was endured the past."

But Sordello again quailed at the magnitude of the task, until a voice seemed to speak to his heart:

"Sordello wake.
God has conceded two sights to a man—
One of men's whole work, time's completed plan,
The other of the minute's work, man's first
Step to the plan's completeness; what's dispersed
Save hope of that supreme step, which descried
Earliest, was meant still to remain untried
Only to give you heart to take your own
Step, and there stay—leaving the rest alone?
Where is the vanity? Why count as one
The first step with the last step? What is gone
Except Rome's aery magnificence,
That last step you'ld take first?—an evidence
You were God; be man now. Let those glances fall.

The basis, the beginning step of all,
Which proves you just a man—is that gone too?"

Still the great problem is unsolved, while he thinks:

"Ferrara's reached, Goito's left behind:
As you then were, as half yourself, desist.
—The warrior-part of you may, an it list,
Finding real faulchions difficult to poise,
Fling them afar, and taste the cream of joys
By wielding such in fancy—what is bard
Of you, may spurn the vehicle that marred
Elys so much, and in free fancy glut
His sense, yet write no verses."

Later, when trying to eloquently persuade Saliguerra to adopt the Guelf cause, the old failing spoils his chance of success:

"Yet most Sordellos' argument dropped flat
Through his accustomed fault of breaking yoke,
Disjoining him who felt from him who spoke.

"Bid Naddo think at Mantua, he had but
To look into his Promptuary, put
Finger on a set thought in a set speech:
But was Sordello fitted thus for each
Conjecture? Nowise; since, within his soul,
Perception brooded unexpressed and whole.

"So was I, royal so, and if I fail,
'Tis not the royalty ye witness quail,
But one deposed, who caring not exert
Its proper essence, trifled malapert
With accidents instead—good things assigned
As heralds of a better thing behind—
And, worthy through display of these, put forth
Never the inmost all-surpassing worth
That constitutes him King precisely since
As yet no other spirit may evince
Its like;

"Tokens of the existence, bright or dim,
Of a transcendent all-embracing sense
Demanding only outward influence,
A soul, in Palma's phrase, above his soul,
Power to uplift his power—this moon's control,
Over the sea-depths—and their mass had swept
Onward from the beginning and still kept
Its course: but years and years the sky above
Held none, and so, untasked of any love,

His sensitiveness idled, now amort,
Alive now, and to sullenness or sport
Given wholly up, disposed itself anew
At every passing instigation, grew
And dwindled at caprice, in foam-showers spilt,
Wedge-like insisting, quivered now a gilt
Shield in the sunshine, now a blinding race
Of whitest ripples o'er the reef—found place
For much display; not gathered up and, hurled
Right from his heart, encompassing the world."

So failed Sordello, although, according to the chronicles, he "passed with posterity, to all intents, for just the god he never could become."

"As Knight, Bard, Gallant, men were never dumb
In praise of him: while what he should have been,
Could be, and was not—the one step too mean
For him to take—we suffer at this day because of."

A record of a failure, yet a magnificent record, a great poetic success in itself, as were *Paracelcus*, the *Ring and the Book*, and other works of Browning, the master who made obscurities live vividly, so vividly that one is gripped by them, obsessed by them. It may be suggested that the study of *Sordello* is so fascinating as to produce a positive Browning Complex.

G. E. SLADE.

The autograph MSS. of four birthday poems written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning at the age of 14, which, so far as is known, have never been published, were offered for sale in the form of autographed manuscripts in New York recently. The first is addressed "To my dearest Papa on his welcome birthday, May 28, 1820," and signed "You affec^te^ child Ba," another is "To my dearest Mamma on her birthday," one "On my sweet Henry's birthday," and another "To my sister, on her birthday, written on the prospect of recovering from a dangerous illness." At the same age Elizabeth wrote an epic on the Battle of Marathon.

"The best of all stories by the greatest of all poets in the noblest language ever designed for poetry," is how Mr. Amery described the *Odyssey*. "We no longer need apologize for our instinctive conviction that, in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, we are dealing, not with crude compilations from originally disjointed ballads, but with finished masterpieces of consummate art, planned and worked out, each as a whole, in accordance with a recognized and highly developed literary technique. For we now know that behind the poetic legends which Homer used as his quarry, stood a background of mighty historic events, whose outline, at first dimly described, is continually gaining in precision and fullness of detail."

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : LXVII

FLORENCE CONVERSE, who is the author of a number of books of poetry, novels and history, was born in New Orleans. She is author of *The Sphinx*, *Garments of Praise* and *The House of Prayer*. Miss Converse has served on the staff of *The Churchman* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, and writes us of poetry the following :

> " The part that poetry plays in modern life is the same rôle that it has always played, down the ages. Always it is a revelation of the individual poet's mind and heart, and a medium for revolt and questioning, of the eternal mysteries of life. There are also, in almost every age, poets whose verse is a passionate criticism of the generation in which they write. We have them to-day."

From the fine sonnets in her *Collected Poems* (Dutton) we have chosen " Friendship " :

We are not called to love that old, one way
Our mothers used ; that way the poets sing,
Dan Cupid's way, that blots out everything
Save you and me and love. This latter day
Unlearns us of our old love-lesson ; nay,
  Not all of us, but our two selves, that bring
  Such wistful hearts to school, unmurmuring.
That way, we are not called to love, I say—
And say, and say ; yet seems I am so slow
  To learn, so lingering laggard slow to lift
    The love-gates of my heart and let the flood
Race down the world. Be patient, yes, I know,
  From that close, niggard way we've cut adrift,
    But—'tis the old tradition in my blood.

The latter third of this volume is given to a " Masque For Sibyls," in which a young prophetess and an aged Sibyl, whom the children call Grannie, Apollo, whom the children called " the Harper," Greek, children, Italian children and Gothic children, are the characters. The time of the Masque is set at the edge of Eternity : from mid-afternoon to sunset of a day in Spring. This Masque is a highly imaginative and colourful creation, and Miss Converse says of it : " The spirit of the Sibyl's story is the spirit of the old wives' tales."

We close this review with a delightful sonnet on Spring :

The snow went out last night in silver smoke,
And I have slept me back to yesterday,
Behind the Winter, and beyond the May ;
For Autumn's wraith was risen when I awoke.
I saw her, and she wore her faded cloak,
And trailed its greening edges past the gray
Dead dust that lies upon the curved roadway.
She sighed, and dry leaves dropped down from an oak.
She wandered with a slow, sleep-walking glide,
And wearily, with never any sound,

But that one sigh that made the oak leaves cling
A moment drowsily, then drop. Nor flower beside
One small, pale crocus, nestled on the ground.

E. Ellsworth Houck prefaces his first volume of poems (*My Hobby*, Dorrance and Co.) with the following lines on a hobby, suggesting his approach to poetry :

What is a hobby ? A hobby is, my friend,
An avocation without gainful end,
Save that it brings, within a given sphere,
A measure of contentment and good cheer,
A sparkle in the goblet of life's wine.
What is your hobby ? Poetry is mine !

Ellsworth Houck writes us that he turns to poetry because he likes it and because it enables him to view the contemporary activities of life through the medium of emotional as well as material existence. " The epic with its real and imaginative memories of the past, the drama with its welded emotions of the past and present, the lyric with its universal appeal ; all translate the hidden secrets of the human race into an open library of thought and feeling. The emotions and aspirations of the human race have changed little through the centuries. In the dramas of the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Roof Gardens of to-day may be found, epitomized, the story of mankind. History reveals the fact that the dramas of a nation's poets are woven into the meshes of the social and religious life of the nation, and future historians will record no exceptions to this rule, therefore, *watch the trend of poetic thought*."

From this first volume of Mr. Houck, we have chosen to give two sonnets. The sonnets in this collection are more successful than the lyrics. " I Long For Youth " follows :

I long for youth, youth of the mind and heart,
Where like the eagle's flight, above, I soar,
Leaving below the outlines of the shore
Where once I stood in loneliness to chart
Upon the sea of life a way, apart
From winding, beaten paths of ancient lore
That led to castles, dark, with closed door ;
Or lost themselves in broken lines of mart.
I long for youth, youth of the heart and mind,
That knows no age but bidden tasks fulfilled,
Youth that forever leaves its cares behind,
Completes to-morrow what to-day it willed ;
Youth that has will to do, directed power
To meet the exigencies of the hour.

The meeting of the Old and the New Year is celebrated in the following graphic sonnet :

Two waiting figures stand beside the gate,
One stands without, the other stands within ;
One cries, " I finish," the other, " I begin."
" Behold ! " says one, " I stand without and wait
For Time to turn the hinges of the gate ; "
The other bows his head and stands within
And hoarsely whispers, " Brother, I have been
Bound on this side and waiting, too, of late."
Thus stand they waiting, listening, peeping through
The iron gates of time that holds them fast ;
Each in his place, the old Year and the New,
The first that is to come and what is last
Of time departing, yet both stand and wait
For Time to open up the swinging gate.

Phantom Thoughts and Certain Paths (Putnam's Sons) presented simultaneously, are the work of a sculptor, Doris Caesar, who writes me she turns to poetry because it has always been very important to her in her profession as a further outlet and stimulus for her impressions. We recall it was Dante who called the noble art of sculpture " God's grandchild," and remember that Dr. Johnson said of sculpture, " Milton was a genius that could cut a colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones."

In these two volumes, the reader meets an artist with a marked zest for life, possessing the poet's ability in the telling of it. A sculptor's reaction to the task of creation, we find in " Form " :

Form
Three dimensional
Solid
Massive,
I love to feel the clay
In my nails,
I love the strong muscles
In my fingers
And the tired ache
That comes from work
Too hard,
I love a dirty overall
And cold
North light,
And the feel of clay

Form
Three dimensional
Solid
Massive
I hate my hands
That cannot do
My will,
I hate the years that pass
And hurry by
And leave me
With the feel of clay.
I hate my soul
That clings
Too close to me,
I want to put it
In a piece of clay.

The tyranny of self, is simply and graphically given in the following poem, from *Certain Paths* :

Bound to ourselves
And earthbound,

We press
Against our chains,

And struggle
To reach one another,
With gestures,
And words—
But we're locked
In the cells
Of our beings,
And our bodies
Are chained
To the earth—
And we cannot escape
The bondage
Of looking
Alone at ourselves.

To the everlasting riddle of what we are, Doris Caesar makes the following answer:

What am I—
The sum of all my thoughts,
The sum of my experience—
Love has given its share,
And pain
And loss
And laughter
And beauty
And fear
And tears—
These add
To me—
I could not be the same
Had I lacked one.

Time Has No Shadow, by Katherine Garrison Chapin, (Dodd, Mead and Co.), a second book of poems from this talented poet, brings to the reader many different and sensitive realizations in the measuring and recording of life's experience. Both lyrics and sonnets are well conceived and well rendered with literary style and sincere emotion. The short lyric which gives title to the volume follows:

Cloud shadows move across the hills,
Slowly changing, the shadow of the straight tree marks the grass.
Light spills small-winged shadows between flowers,
The dial throws a dark line on the hours,
And steel wings mark the earth over which they pass.

You stand between me and the sun;
I bear your shadow as a cool caress.
But time so long ago begun
And swiftly moving,
Only time is shadowless.

And we give "This Last Tree," a fine sonnet:

With a dull axe you slowly fell the trees
  Within that living grove which is my heart;
Scatter their boughs and humble to their knees
  These tall strong-rooted trunks that stand apart,
Waiting to bear anew love's burst of flower,
  Sheltering water of our hidden spring.
Now these are doomed; and here within the hour
  Is a bleak hillside where the axes ring.

O, I had rather they went down in wrath,
  On a great winter night of steel-breathed wind;

In a dark hurricane that cuts a path
   Of wideswept desolation ; but not thinned
Slowly, with steady blows, with creaking sound,
   And I still here to see them on the ground.

Miss Chapin is the author of critical articles and a play, which was performed in New York : *The Tapestry of the Duchess*, and a first volume of poems, *Outside of the World.*

An interesting paragraph on Poetry, just received from Miss Chapin, follows :

> " To my mind we need poetry in modern life for many reasons, one of them because it makes us aware of the qualities of experience. We live too crowded lives, move too fast, read too many opinions and digests, and never get the full flavour of anything. We have dulled our own perceptions. Poetry is not an ' escape ' —In novels we escape into the lives of others. Poetry revivifies and enlarges our own lives."

Roydon Burke, winner of the American Poetry Association's prize of 1929, and author of *Night Song*, and *Fantasy*, gives us a third volume of poetry, *Reverie*, (Bruce Humphries Co.). We find uncommonly admirable sonnets in this book. Musical, sincere and delightful is the work of this poet. We give the first sonnet, " Transient " :

Beauty recalled is not so beautiful
As beauty. No mere memory retains
The full impression. Only the shell remains,
And that must be sufficient. Time may dull
The fairest recollections—may erase
The once-clear details from each treasured scene
Of age or childhood or the year's between—
Even the features of a loved one's face. . . .

Youth, do not dream that life is otherwise,
For all things go the way that we must go.
Remembered beauty fades and splendour dies.
The flaming clouds turn grey, the bright leaves fall.
The fairest days grow dim. We only know
Departed beauty was—and that is all.

A lyric follows, which sings itself into the memory, " Treasure " :

These have I known—the beauty of still nights—
The peace of summer evenings spent alone
In quiet dreaming—darkness—distant lights—
These have I known.

These have I loved—warm meadows in the sun—
Hayfields—hills in the morning—trees that moved

To gentle breezes, bowing one by one—
These have I loved.

This I desire—to keep the memory
Of treasured scenes—and let what may transpire.
That all my past be mine eternally—
This I desire.

The consolations of true faith express themselves in a number of these poems. The last in the book, a hymn, ends with :

Back I came from the shadows,
   Back from dim lands and far,
To the woods and the quiet meadows,
   To the hills where Thy temples are.

With the striking title for a volume of poetry of *Calling Western Union*, (Harper) suggesting the switchboard—of daily use—Genevieve Taggard launches her new collection. The preface, some twenty pages, is an autobiography, telling of early life in Hawaii, East Washington, the land of the Nez Percé Indians, and now in Vermont. She calls it "A Frame for the Verse." Miss Taggard tells of her family and their stepping westward, which had been going on ever since the Taggards, and Bensons, Arnolds, and Hollands had first left Vermont and Virginia. Hawaii proved a garden of Eden to her parents and their little family of three children and with regret they left it, for the intensive farming in Washington, which they found " dull as ditch water, among people who did not know how to live." Miss Taggard's experience in this dreary place taught her, she affirms, what to work against and what to work for. She tells us of her farm—now in Vermont—which she does not farm. She loves it. It lies fifteen miles from Londonderry. On first reaching the Green-Mountain state, this poet related, she thought people went there to rest but, she states as her book goes to press, she was wrong in this idea and tells us why in *Calling Western Union*. In this book is a vibrant and melancholy account of tragic recognitions of social miseries, as instanced in " Sing Lullaby."

It seems everybody is tired now, even the debutante !
Any day now a Big Leaguer will yawn at the fans
And the fans will yawn back and not even boo when he pitches !
The truckmen at the wheel, waiting, fall asleep, stiff.
The boys on strike are tired. And so is the cop.
The unemployed, gosh, tired to death of loafing.
An awful lot of people are getting sick and tired,
Getting sick and tired of war and hard times.

I know a few people who work harder than any.
Some of them are going to get a good long rest under ground
      for being brave.

Some of them are going to get a rest in jail for being too damn
fresh.
But I think the person to pity is really the debutante,
Cute little thing, she says it's a hell of a world !

Miss Taggard's vigorous personality is an important factor in the Bennington University. She has a burning sympathy for the struggles, sufferings, and injustices of the poor and the labourer which overflows in this present volume. Her prose notes in this book carry some striking appreciations, as these quotations from *Note Book I* :

> 'For more than a century poets have been bred on the romantic notion that the individual is capable of godlike perfection. This is poison food, and those who eat it die a lingering and pallid death. . . . Poetry has a small audience, but a large influence. . . . But the young, the ardent, the bewildered, the sensitive are vastly impressed. They accept the doctrine of the poet because he seems godlike ; they require something to adore. . . . The future society will insist that the poet cease his childlike feud with society. The poet of the workingclass will not be cut off from the source of power : the lives of the people with whom he lives."

Sled Against the Door, Gertrude C. L. Whitney's first book (Bruce Humphries), brings to the reader colourful singing. The first poem in the book, " The Closed Door," gives a key to the character of the poet :

Mine is a closed door
To intruders ;
Mine is a heart built
Of steel—
A walled garden within
This exterior *me*.
Love long since departed,
For love had never found
The key—to the door
Of my walled garden
Within this exterior ME !

We find in Miss Whitney's poems a rich vocabulary, employed effectively by one possessed of an intense vitality. The first thirteen lines of " Snowfall " follow :

Newly fallen snow,
Etching faintly the gentle banks
That thirst at the river's edge ;
Virgin snow, touching with white fingers
Each housetop along the way.
Deep river,
That blackly melts snowflakes
In its treacherous bosom,

And on its velvet top receives
A golden shaft of light
That patterns a phantom tree
With arms outstretched across the river
From bank to bank.

We give the first stanza from "Ode to Waltham"—a beloved city:

O languid, lovely city,
River-enclosed Waltham, lying content
Within your limited areas,
Your steeples crash the blue
Of Heaven's panoply, their pointed tops
Piercing stolidly the morning air,
Sweet with new buds blown; the warming sun
Sweeps across your brown low hills
A smiling early morning mist
From rounded water-tower on highest hill
To lie easily upon the calm river,
Several hundred feet below.

Edna Davis Romig, associate professor of English at the University of Colorado, is author of *Lincoln Remembers*, *Marse Lee*, *Blue Hills* and *The Torch Undimmed*. A fine and truly poetic quality is to be found in the work of Mrs. Romig. In her fifth book, *Sketches and Overtones* (Torrance) there is much to quote. A short and successful poem is "Shower":

Even the rain comes with a secret beauty
In these high valleys, comes like clashing bells
Between hill masses deeply violet;
Then winding horns begin as the music swells
Over far fields grown fresh and greenly wet.
Something half startled, shy, and secretly withdrawn
These rains share with the bright expectant dawn.

"From the Summit" is a lovely thing:

From what white summit came this cavalcade
Of rushing water, with white flying manes,
The thunder of the thudding hastening hooves,
Wildly cavorting, whirling free from reins?
From what high pasture to what pasture moves
Down gulch and canyon, swift as the swiftest bird,
This turbulent, untamed, stampeding herd?

Mrs. Romig's sonnets have distinction as well as her brief lyrics. "Not To Have Known" follows:

Not to have known this flashing swift occasion
As shining bright as some indomitable blade
Swept from the scabbard and as bravely stayed
By the poised hand, the calmer mind's persuasion;

Not ever to have known this swift invasion,
This proud high-bannered beautiful crusade
Of Love—by such thought is the heart dismayed.
And to have known such joy is consecration.
And we have known, no matter what the years
May perilously prepare or shroud in mist—
Pain, joy, grief, sorrow, laughter, terror, tears—
Even our memory may still keep tryst.
We shall go quietly, remembering
This gallant hour, this proud high-bannered spring.

A new book of poetry reaches us for review from the Poet Laureate of South Carolina, appointed by special act of the Governor and the Legislature. Archibald Rutledge, born in McClellanville, South Carolina, in 1883, received his education in Charleston and at Union College; graduating in 1904 he has since that year been the Head of the English Department in the Mercersburg Academy. He has been honoured by many degrees and awards.

For nine books of poetry and eleven books of prose he has received the praise of distinguished judges, Dr. Henry Van Dyke saying: "Here is literature of the highest quality."

Mr. Rutledge writes for us a special paragraph on poetry:

> "Poetry has been a lifelong passion with me. I write it because I can best express in it my dreams and visions. I think it should be simple, sincere, and poignant. I am a great listener to the Voices; and I believe that artists (whether or not I be one) are not so much creators as they are transmitters of the beauty of an invisible world. All real poetry, out of whatever age, seems to me contemporary; and for that reason I believe that those poets who take their art seriously should give small heed to what may happen to be the 'modern manner.' I think we have poetry whenever we have Truth presented in concentrated form, and melodiously, nobly, beautifully, and with the air of other-worldliness."

From a touching lyric in this book to the "Young Poet" we give the last stanza, which shows his confidence in the poet:

Far is the Place, friend,
Faint is the gleam;
O yet I know you
Will follow the Dream;
Its beauty and no other,
Gentle invincible brother.

From these ninety-five poems there is so much one would wish to quote. We will take "My Country":

If in my songs the note of grief is heard,
The sound of evening bells and elegies,

Melodies by moonlight of the mockingbird,
The night-wind through the dim and dreaming trees—
My voice is of my Country. I was born
By sorrowful fair shores, that in the arms
Of visions sleep, far, magical, forlorn,
Mourned by the beauty of pines and oaks and palms.
You do not hear me singing. But you hear
The twilight wind through myrtle, bay, and pine;
The mystery of marshes wide and drear;
The golden bells of the lustrous jasmine-vine;
The grieving loveliness that live-oaks wear;
The wildwood where the sad lost moonbeams shine.

South Carolina, known as the Palmetto State on the Atlantic Coast, is one of the original thirteen States, and is sought now by many for its delightful climate and its atmosphere of the picturesque South. Very popular is the old town of Charleston. In such an atmosphere as this these songs have been sung.

"Farewell" is a fine sonnet, inspired by one beloved and gone:

When the rose fails, or when I see the form
Of Beauty fading, with no help to stay;
Or days of azure darkening into storm,
Or glory into gloom swept far away;
When what was tender grace is grace no more,
And what was swiftness can no longer run,
Or be apparelled in the gleams it wore,
O then, rejoicing, I remember One

Who left me in her loveliness and light,
Fair on that frontier where all radiance fails,
Her beauty sovereign as she sank from sight;
As on a sumptuous summer night, when sails
The white-winged moon adown the hyacinth deep,
A tryst for God with other lands to keep.

These poems of the Poet Laureate of South Carolina sing into one's memory, as instanced by the last stanza of "Requiem":

Winds of the ancient deep,
  Night that descends,
Take her now in your keep,
  Be you her friends;
Now that she lies asleep,
  And my world ends.

Mr. Rutledge announced when he offered his last collection of poems, *Veiled Eros*, in 1933, that it was probably his last volume of verse. We are glad that he reconsidered and has given us *Brimming Chalice* and hope that there will be other poems from this gifted laureate.

A first book of poems from Donald Parson (*Glass Flowers*, John W. Luce Co., Boston, Mass.) brings evidence of marked poetic talent. Mr. Parson gives a clue to his own stand on poetry in his dedication, which is

> "To John Livingston Lowes, Who in an Age of Revolt, eloquently defends the beauty of convention."

In this collection we find excellent sonnets, as instanced in the following: "To Keats"—

Lord of the pulpy word and limpid line,
Who loaded every rift with golden ore,
Yet perished in the pallid dawn, before
Your trembling hand could mint the coinage fine!
Death brought you melancholy's anodyne,
And though the faithful Shelley might deplore
His Adonais, better you should soar
To dwell with Shakespeare on the height divine,
The creatures of your brain shall deathless be.
The Grecian urn gleams like the Holy Grail;
And ever, where the isthmus meets the sea,
Stout Cortez gazes, wondering at his fame;
Still sings, still sings the immortal nightingale,
Because one purple dusk you sobbed his name.

We give a quatrain, "Fine Writing":

We torture words; we tear a verb to tatters;
Our nouns by gales of adjectives are swept.
How we could dress a theme that really matters!
Yet Scripture simply states that "Jesus wept."

Mr. Parson's interesting letter from Rome, on November 15th, tells us:

> "I am over here following geographically the steps of Keats; modern poetry has too much neglected this path. Commendable as its activity and its experimentation with new forms may be, I feel that it is running after false gods whenever it abandons rhythms and rhyme and that imagism, futurism, whatever name one may give to the numerous forms of free verse, are so many retrograde steps away from true poetry."

A gifted lyric considering Death, which ever draws the poet's mind, follows:

The fog creeps in like sin upon the soul,
So plausible . . . so stealthy . . . and so still;
But first it blurs the buoy that marks the shoal,
Before it blots the light-house on the hill.

The tide steals in like Death—the ancient foe,
Implacable . . . resistless . . . and austere;

But first it floods the marshy flat below,
Before it laps the logs of Lethe pier.

Yet fog may quick as any eyelid close;
The tidal wave can like a tiger leap;
And sometimes Death comes quite
Suddenly. . . .

Changing Winds (G. P. Putnams Sons) is Dorothy Quick's second book of poetry. She tells us in a recent letter: "I write poetry because it is really a part of me that just demands expression. I write other things—stories for magazines, even a play, and I have just finished my first novel, which I expect will be published in the Fall—but poetry is my first love and like first love, it will always be indescribably dear. I feel that poetry has a most important part in the life of to-day because it is the hope of the future, in that it always represents man's reaching out for the ideal and for beauty and that, in these days of stress and distress is of paramount importance."

In this book of some hundred pages, Miss Quick shows herself to be a gracious singer. "Riches" is an illustration:

No one can wind the sun's gold thread
Nor trade moon-silver for a bed,

But these are riches that endure
To feed the souls of rich and poor.

"Attempts," which follows, is well done:

I knocked at the door of your love—
That you thought nothing of.

I knocked at the door of your mind—
You still were unkind.

I knocked at the door of your pride—
Then—you let me inside!

From a number of sonnets in this book, we have chosen "There Are Some Things":

There are some things whose memory is sweet,
Sweeter than scent of jasmine in the dawn;
Some recollections time cannot defeat,
Remembrances continually reborn.
Each mind contains a treasure house to store
With knowledge of the things we loved the best,
And like an armour shielding us from war
With life, these things come forth at our request.
The touch of ancient books, the green of spring,

Blue moonlight drifting from Italian skies,
Moments of laughter ; these remembering
Bring restfulness to world enwearied eyes.
Life of her gifts is prodigal in truth,
And many gives to them eternal youth.

Miss Quick's poems are to be found in many magazines and she is a frequent reader on poetry programmes.

The State of Maine has contributed a number of poets to our generation. Among this number is Robert Peter Tristram Coffin, born in Brunswick, Maine. Mr. Coffin's *Yoke of Thunder* was reviewed in the September-October 1932 number of THE POETRY REVIEW. Poet, essayist and biographer, Mr. Coffin has won numerous honours. His books of poetry include : *Christ Church*, *Dew and Bronze*, *Golden Falcon*, *The Yoke of Thunder*, *Ballads of Square-Toed Americans* and *Strange Holiness*. His essays include : *Book of Crowns and Cottages* and *An Attic Room*. His biographies : *Laud : Storm Centre of Stuart England*, *The Dukes of Buckingham*, *Portrait of an American* and *Lost Paradise*. Mr. Coffin, who is at present teaching at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, writes me his definition of poetry in the following paragraphs :

> " It seems to me that poetry might be defined as *saying the best one can about life*. We all know how full of indirection and anti-climax even the finest experience. We know how disappointing living by the Mondays and Tuesdays and Wednesdays can be. Well, the poet is the man who lives, not in the week days, but the Sundays. He makes all the days best days. He lives over his experience and distils its essence into a quintessence. He is aided in this process by a beautiful angel we all entertain unawares, an angel who is also an artist. (Not all angels are !) The name of that angel is Memory. Memory does something to experience ; makes it better than it was ; selects, chooses, rearranges. No wonder the old Greeks made a lovely deity of that human faculty.
>
> " Many of my poems are poems that I have been writing for many years. My memory has been at work on the bright moments I have made poems of in *Strange Holiness*. She has brought out the significance of them. Many of these moments are moments made into monuments. Monuments that bear upon their faces the laws of life."

In this new volume of poems, *Strange Holiness* (MacMillan) Coffin concerns himself with the scene at hand. " The Spider " is very characteristic of his genius—a poem of six stanzas from which we quote the first and the last :

With six small diamonds for his eyes
He walks upon the Summer skies,

Drawing from his silken blouse
The lacework of his dwelling house.

. . . . .

He does not know he is unkind,
He has a jewel for a mind
And logic deadly as dry bone,
This small son of Euclid's own.

We give "The Cup of Day," a short and charming thing:

The revolutions of the night,
The planets' subtle roll,
The spirals of the stars unwind
My morning-glory's scroll.

The high, whole night is over me,
Earth's shadow rears away,
Yet this tight and fluted cup
Is full of busy day.

I shall not be so early up
To see the east turn gold,
But there will be a little heaven
Before my eyes unrolled.

"Bees," "The Barn In Summer," "Show," "The Startled Heron," "The Pheasant," "Rain," "Crickets," "The Pine," "A Wild Bee's Nest," "The Counting of Sheep," "The Housing of the Lambs," carry the delight that Mr. Coffin celebrates of the subjects at his door.

His poem "The Shadow" carries one into space. Beginning with:

Night is nothing but small
Shadow-cone behind a ball.

It is a gentle, tiny flaw
Hiding from vast, blazing law,

Running, hiding its cool face
Behind the tiny specks and space

Ending with:

For every morning to the light
Turn the flowers born of night.

From the dark earth rise the ones
Who can call themselves God's sons.

"Sureties" expresses a deep desire of Mr. Coffin's:

Two things I wish to have by me
To the edge of eternity,—

The sight of water and the high
Furrows leaned against the sky.

There is something whole and sweet
In furrows running till they meet.

There is no loneliness or trouble
Where water makes all beauty double.

The ages change and men, not these
Old testaments of sureties.

There is a covenant in these two
Leaves of life, the brown and blue.

Water, and the paralleled sod
Scriptures from the hand of God.

Mary J. Elmendorf belongs to the poets of the great Pacific Northwest. *Two Wives* (Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho) is her first book; her talent is markedly narrative, and her expressed interest is in the drama of human lives with the revelation of character they disclose. The title poem, which opens the book, is an excellent example of the talent of Mrs. Elmendorf:

Small comfort is there in a house
  When its upright head
Is a man with dual wives—one living
  And the other dead.

The one-way river Emma had crossed
  Three years before,
But her presence clung like a hungry gull
  To the hither shore.

And Nora knew it—Nora alone—
  All too well.
But one who sees invisible things
  Must never tell.

"You're a dusky elf, little Nora," said John;
  "My Emma was fair."
The sudden shadow was substance to Nora
  Back of his chair.

"You're shy—elusive and wild as a fawn,
  But Emma was still
And strong." The wind was a slippered sigh
  Across the sill.

March, like a princess, came that year,
  All silver and slow
Out of a moody sky that held
  Remembrance of snow, etc., etc.

In this book of some 150 pages, one meets many personalities of the poet's environ. Many portraits are clearly and well drawn with a racy flavour. We find here and there a sonnet, and give " Metamorphosis " :

Perched daily on his high worn stool at his high
Worn desk, he writes and figures in a neat
Old-fashioned hand on his ledger's spotless sheet.
He seldom speaks. His fellow-clerks pass by
With a nod, beholding but a plodder shy
And musty as a word long obsolete
And never dreaming that the grub they greet
With pity hides a brilliant butterfly.

And yet he shuts the office-door each night
On dingy toil and, drably trudging home,
He walks a braver world than theirs and large.
His fancy flames. The meek drudge sinks from sight,
While Hanno sails again the unsailed foam,
The Cid rides forth, or Custer sounds the charge.

Mary Elmendorf writes for the love of writing. She tells us :

> " I have always been interested in the reasons, basing human actions and reactions ; perhaps that is the reason why I tend toward the narrative form."

Lefa Morse Eddy completes with *Mary* her trilogy of women—(*Eve*, 1933 ; *Sarah*, 1935) previously reviewed in our magazine. Miss Eddy divides her story in two parts. In part one we find—" Now," " Nazareth," " Witnesses," " News," " Prelude to Candlemas," " Recognition," " Egypt," " Exiles Return." Part two comprises " Passover," " Homeward from Jerusalem," " Time Passes," " Nazareth Once More," " Mary Visits Capernaum," and the Finale. From these titles it will be seen that, through the medium of sonnets, this poet retells the story of Jesus. The tragic pathos of the motherhood of Mary is given in the sonnet " Golgotha," of which we give the octave :

Now in Golgotha Mary sees her son
Once more. Close up the eyes and steel the heart
While she stands there but not as those apart,
Beside the cross from which weak others run.
Oh, he shall see that here at least is one
Who knows him true and will not yield nor start
Though nails and thorns incise her flesh to smart
As they do his, till his last breath is done !

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE

"*The world is so full of a number of things*
That I'm sure we should all be as happy as Kings." (R.L.S.)

THESE charming words—without any after-thought as to the reality of a King's happiness—are probably as true now as when they were written. The literary world in general, and the poetic world in particular, are very full of a number of things to-day, all designed to minister to our enjoyment. We have Mr. George Barker, excavating or disembowelling Blake and discovering a multitude of strange things in his inside (that is, Blake's inside—we do not criticize Mr. Barker's); we have Mr. Grigson running around, uttering shrill cries and occasionally cocking a snook at the Sitwells; we see the latter bend occasionally from their Olympian detachment to bestow a patronizing pat on some young poet who outvies even his fellows in bombast and fury; we notice a number of engaging controversies in the press about modern poetry (as though this must inevitably differ fundamentally from the ancient); and occasionally we find some abstracted and rather self-centred person who sits back from all this turmoil and quietly busies himself with really writing poetry.

In the last and unfortunately scanty class of performers, we must place Mr. E. H. W. Meyerstein. His output of conscientious and carefully wrought work, both in prose and in poetry, has been rich and constant for many years now, and in our opinion will receive with passing time still more of the attention which it well deserves. His latest published poem (*Briancourt*, Richards Press, 3s. 6d.) will not detract from that reputation.

The poem is an impression of the mind of Mme de Brinvilliers, the seventeenth-century poisoner, on her way to execution. It combines remarkable analytic insight into the nature of the mental tension of so dread an hour, with pictorial and dramatic force in setting out in order and with few and bold strokes the actual canvas on which the chain of crimes is exhibited.

This canvas is still the mind in question, storm-driven and finding its only anchor in the thought of Briancourt, the tutor, half-loved at first, half-dragged to share the crime; wholly loved at last—perhaps because he had strength to draw himself free.

The metre used is the decasyllabic quatrain of the Annus Mirabilis, and exhibits all the technical mastery one naturally expects from Mr. Meyerstein. The style shows his usual intense compression of thought—so intense at times as to make for obscurity, a serious defect in a poem which must move at the presto appassionnato speed of this poem. We instance the verse:

How I was at the final fête at Vaux,
A watcher of Finance's apogee,
And saw defile the Fâcheux in a row,
And scoffed the surintendant's pedigree.

—where one has to work this out so carefully that the wheel stops a moment and the fire dies down.

It is hardly fair to select one coal from this furnace for exhibition, but these three verses show so well the power of crescendo which this metre has in the right hands, that I cannot resist them :

More than grey granules purpling yellow fires,
More than the papered sulphate's folded square,
More than fixed mercury and insane desires,
More, more than these a nimbus of bright hair !

More than the virulence from dead beasts distilled,
More than the bezoars of cardinals,
More than charmed rings with prophylactic filled,
More, more than these one face between four walls !

More than the horror of a shrivelling head,
More than sunk eyes, locks bleached before their day,
More than teeth ruptured on a crust of bread,
More, more than these thy Magdalen, d'Aubray !

Not a very usual poem : its fire is deep, reserved, almost secret—an alchemical fire ; the poem of a solitary, of a deep mind, of a thinker who is not ignorant of the movement of the heart.

* * * * *

We must make a pause here for the books we have now to consider are, with one exception, of smaller poetic stature ! The Upanishads are of such mountainous dimensions viewed from any aspect as to dwarf, like Himalaya, every other height. They can even come clearly away from a solemn and portentous preface such as that provided by Mr. W. B. Yeats to Shree Purohit Swami's translation of ten of them (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.) ; indeed, we might say they shine in the contrast with new purity and lustre. As when we turn from the conception of Mr. Yeats " saddened by the thought " that he can no longer " confound George Russell " with this version—to read in the Kena-Upanishad, " That which makes the tongue speak, but needs no tongue to explain, that alone is Spirit ; not what sets the world by the ears."

The truth is that there is nothing of Gael or Celt in these Scriptures ; and no twilight in their land. The translation is most admirable in its reduction of these living essentials to the common terms of speech. It would, indeed, be hard to praise too highly the work of the translator ; and for the Upanishads themselves we should need to write a book, if we had the temerity to talk at all of these sacred works, where for the hearing and the seeing, the still and the unlearned, the keys of life are all concealed ; and where one sentence is a fit meditation for many hours. As this from the " Chandogya-Upanishad " :

> " Orange, blue, yellow, red, are not less in man's arteries than in the sun."

or again,

> " We pass into the Self during sleep, but do not know Him."

So we may in time know more of these things ; but they are to be neither learned nor explained in the medium of print.

We now come to smaller works by younger men ; and as often these young men take pride in a disrespectful attitude to many things that age has touched, so they will the more appreciate it if we take a disrespectful view of some of their latest productions. No one appears to have the courage to get up and tell these young people that they are writing witless nonsense of little literary worth and less popular appeal, so we will make a start here.

Mr. Christopher Lee has written a book of Poems (The Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.) which purports to contain a series of sonnets. From a careful perusal of these " sonnets " only two possible conclusions emerge. Either that Mr. Lee does not know what a sonnet is ; or that he thinks the sonnet needs improvement and that he is the man for the job. The first hypothesis may be true and time may set that right ; the second is false on both points.

Despite these technical infelicities the book has poetry in it and an urgent sense of life.

It has an even stronger sense of Gerard Hopkins. Nearly all poetry is derivative in one way or another, but derivation from an anonymous traditional stream is safer than derivation from so strongly marked an individualist as Hopkins. What can we say of this passage :

> Against the stack's rough edge the sky stirs, cracks
> lets oozelight ebb (no flood this) over space
> uncharitable ; sweeps comfort-shadow, grace
> of hedgebed by, gleams dew's drip, berry's wax.
> Branches stand out, numb knee asserts, hurts, slacks
> and bends, skirts straw for warmth ; hot eyes, cold face
> knuckle-rubbed, stiff as ruts, yield ; field and lace
> of reeds show ; still pierce-light of mercy lacks.

but that the Heraclitean fire burns less brightly here ? Or of this :

> God,
> there's no guard, but you will in, will in
> though all within is fierce
> stubborn to resist.

but that Hopkins rings a truer note ?

Of Charles Madge (*The Disappearing Castle*, Faber and Faber, 6s.) it is enough to say that he very frequently writes sheer nonsense ; and nonsense which is not redeemed by the Carrollian graces of innocence and humour ; that when not writing nonsense, he writes obvious commonplaces, devoid alike of profundity, of subtlety, of beauty. Such, for instance, as this :

> "Floods are frequent because the rivers of Britain have been neglected for a century . . .
>
> "To-day you cannot fight summer heat with haphazard measures."

We welcome his system of writing his poems in undisguised prose form, instead of the commoner fashion of breaking them up into lines of odd length. This simplifies the reviewer's task, who can now say simply, "This is poor prose"; instead of as formerly, "This is poor prose, masquerading as verse."

The fifth book before us for review (*The Fifth Decad of Cantos*, Ezra Pound, Faber and Faber, 6s.) cannot be discussed appropriately in this Forum, as it is actually a rather tedious polyglot prose treatise on economics, showing no trace at all of the lovely and lovable Pound of "Personae," "Lustra" and "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley." The blurb on the inside of the jacket modestly concludes with the note that

> "it is an impertinence even to remark that this is the most important volume of poetry to be published in 1937."

We agree: it is—but perhaps they really mean, "in this century."

T. Weston Ramsey.

Another Political Poet

The publishers of Mr. Rex Warner's *Poems* (Boriswood, 5s.) inform us that his work is "already known and appreciated by most discerning critics." We know those "discerning critics."

He has two preoccupations, bird-life, and communism. It is observed that he does not mention the lark, the cuckoo, or the nightingale (except that the lark turns up once, in order to rhyme with "dark"). These birds are presumably outmoded and *bourgeois*. Describing mallards he says that their wings are "like garden shears," and that they have "necks like sticks." True similes, no doubt, though they hardly cause the affirmation, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty" to spring into the mind.

He is so fervent an admirer of the present government of Russia that it is somewhat surprising that he has not scornfully discarded his baptismal name in favour of something Russian, or of "Rufus," or, at least, of its non-committal initial. Surely he knows that to the Romans "Rex" was a name so odious that even the Cæsars never assumed it?

Here are two typical specimens of Mr. Rex Warner's work, the first a "Sonnet" (*Sic !*):

The brightness, the peculiar splendour
of sun on bark, the gleam of a single petal
varnished with light, or an old piece of tin
are always in the mind like points for lighting.

Burning like beacons bidding to the shore
are jointed things, or wood carefully sharpened,

moon in a pool, the dark source of a stream,
a dead mouse as though resting on moss.

Inalienable wealth the lightning eye
has given, and the conscious hand to keep,
to keep us moving, keep us guessing, safeguard
our slow steps in and out the ruined city
where already is ready to spring this heraldic lion,
the lynx-eyed evil of the dying order.

Come then, companions. This is the spring of blood,
heart's heyday, movement of masses, beginning of good.

No more shall men take pride in paper and gold,
in furs in cars in servants in spoons in knives.
But they shall love instead their friends and their wives,
owning their bodies at last, things which they have sold.
Come away then
you fat man.

You don't want your watch chain.
But don't interfere with us, because we know you too well.
If you do that you will lose your top hat
and be knocked on the head until you are dead.
Come with us, if you can, and, if not, go to hell
with your comfy chairs, your talk about the police,
your doll wife, your cowardly life, your newspaper, your interests
in the East,
you, there, who are so patriotic, you liar, you beast!

Some readers may think that either poem might have been written by any one of half a dozen of our "modern" poets. But the "discerning critic" who can see poetry in these lines must have, not eyes, but the "patent double million magnifying gas microscopes of hextra power" which Mr. Sam Weller so modestly disclaimed in the witness-box. It is just possible that, if Mr. Rex Warner would let his adored Hammer and Sickle perform upon his imagination their proper functions, and if he some day experienced some great emotion, he *might* develop into a poet.

Miss Dorothy Hewlett's new life of Keats, *Adonais* (Hurst and Blackett, 15s.), is a formidable-looking volume of over 400 pages, but I wish it had been longer. It gives a fascinating picture of Keats and his friends, with copious extracts from his and their letters.

Of special interest are the quotations from contemporary reviews of Keats's poems. The strange superstition that Keats in his lifetime was utterly overlooked (a superstition to which I attribute the eagerness of some of the "discerning critics" mentioned above to discover a new genius every month), can now be banished.

Miss Hewlett's comments on Keats's craftsmanship are often illuminating, though, of course, not all her readers will always agree with her praise. A critic is open to criticism. And why, on the other hand, does she slight some lines in "Bards of passion and of mirth"? I have little doubt that those lines

> "Underneath large blue-bells tented,
> Where the daisies are rose-scented,
> And the rose herself has got
> Perfume that on earth is not,"

seemed anything but exaggerated to a little girl called Alice who was led into Wonderland nearly half a century later.

I wish that I could have read Miss Hewlett's *Adonais* before I recently stood, with my fellow-pilgrims to Rome, by the grave of him whose head-stone so falsely declares:

> "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

SOME PERSONAL OPINIONS

Apart from the fact that I am a professional reviewer I deem myself even more qualified to review *Stand With Me Here*, by Robert Francis (Macmillan, 8s. 6d.) by virtue of possessing a stake in the county in the heart of rural England. Many of the poems concern the joys and worries of a country-life—"Artist," "Broken View," "Earthworm," but "Hay" is the only one of that genre which at all succeeds in transporting me "where silent as bronze and colour of bronze to the hips, the haymen ride to the barn in waves of hay." A nodding acquaintance with a dictionary, to say nothing of Semantics, would have prevented "Appearances and Disappearances" from being spoiled by the use of "undivisive" and "aboriginal" when obviously "undivided" and "elemental" were *les mots justes*. Again a knowledge of syntax in "Pitch Pine"; of punctuation in "Diver," and of rhyming in "The Wall" would have changed mediocre poems into tolerably good ones.

This writer may be good at prose *but* until he has passed his apprenticeship in the most consummate of all the crafts known to man he will not make a good poet.

Reviewers are members of a muchly-maligned race and, in fairness, I mention the fact that I have read every one of the 425 poems in the *Collected Poems of Cecil Floersheim* (Chatto and Windus, 10s. 6d.). This talented poet graduated with Honours in Modern History, was called to the Bar, latterly received the O.B.E. and died at sea on his way home from Australia in April of last year. Had the first part of the book been carefully pruned it would have gained in beauty, for beauty it undoubtedly possesses, though tinged with melancholy. This is very noticeable in " Vale Æternum Vale " (p. 292), and detracts from an otherwise beautiful poem. One would like to know what fate befel the unfinished drama, two choruses of which adorn pp. 296–8. Judged by these fragments the world of letters is the poorer. " The Cathedral " (p. 13) was mainly suggested by Chartres and is a noble structure of verse builded in its honour. The penultimate stanza of " In a Pine-wood " demonstrates the true quality of poetry whilst " Ghosts " (p. 39) is in the real Swinburnean tradition but is followed by a jangle entitled " A Toast to the Young " (p. 43). " A Dream " (p. 45) is so satisfying in its music that I read it again and again, whereas " Her Portrait " (p. 49) is spoiled by misplaced assonance. " Beatrice and Anselmo " (p. 55) is based in part on a translation of one of the Novelle of Bandello. It is a lengthy ballad of some twenty pages and makes one feel instinctively that the poet was at home in this medium. The following is a fair sample of its worth :—

> " And broad beneath him showed the shining plains
> With rivers swollen like an old man's veins.
> The air was pregnant with the May to be,
> And all the gladness and the greenery
> Made riot in his heart as on he rode ;
> And ever at his side his shadow strode,
> And ever the processioned pines went by . . ."

" The Tree " (p. 221) is the finest lyric in the book—a true example of what a lyric should be. " The Doves " (p. 272) translated from the Arabic is an exquisite piece of writing which truly mirrors the spirit of the East. The third reading of " The Quest " (p. 280) only served to strengthen my first impression of the nearness of its approach, in concept, to " The Hound of Heaven." I cannot resist quoting

> " By hunger of him led astray,
> I his reality pursue,
> And foiled, the endless quest renew.
> For tho' his clinging skirts I find,
> He who them, as clouds the wind,
> Informs with motion and with shape,
> Doth still my faltering touch escape."

The Second Part consists of Translations from the Greek Anthology of which the satirical epitaph on Cretho from Leonidas of Tarentum (p. 374), together with verses from the Chinese, make an instant appeal by reason of our universal kinship to the Great Mother of us all. The Third Part—Epigrams and Lighter Poems—betrays a touch of humour unguessed at in his earlier poems.

In a foreword to his *Sonnets*, Oswald Norman quotes a learned friend who said that sonnet-writing was like dancing in chains. One is tempted to ask if he had ever heard of Shakespeare, Milton, Sidney, Drayton or the Brownings ? Yet—in extenuation—how many persons would feel capable of defining a sonnet, either philologically or metrically: whilst the number of those able to descant on the history of the noblest of all poetic forms from its birth in thirteenth-century Italy to the present day are few and far between. Having thus cleared the air, it now only remains to pronounce whether the sonnets under review prove worthy of their nomenclature or not. The following, certainty:—"Easter Day" (p. 8), "To a child" (p. 9), "Happiness" (p. 12) and in especial "The soul's raiment" (p. 25). Out of twenty a mere fifth only succeeded in passing the test, by reason of their avoidance of pure and applied formality.

N.F.N.

The Cambridge University Press is publishing *Some Greek Poems of Love and Beauty*, translated by J. M. Edmonds, editor and translator of *Theocritus* and *The Greek Lyric and Elegiac Fragments*. This new book is a selection from a larger unpublished collection, which the translator calls "The Little Things of Greek Poetry," in which he has translated nearly all the extant short poems—only omitting one or two that have already been successfully rendered by other translators. The originals are not given, but there is an index with references to books where they can be found, and notes are added to indicate what readings have been preferred. An Introduction gives a brief account of the poets and their work.

Chinese poems have been translated by English poets; but translations into English by Chinese poets are rare. The Cambridge University Press is publishing a small book of *Chinese Lyrics*, translated by Mr. T. K. Ch'u, and with a substantial Introduction by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. The translations, besides having a peculiar charm of their own, should deserve consideration and comparison with other English versions by authors not Chinese. They have an authentic and native tone, and the translator has been careful to imitate as nearly as possible the Chinese rhythms. The book hints at a common philosophy different from the Western, and at a landscape strangely remote and full of journeyings. His poems are chosen from works of the tenth to the seventeenth century.

The girls of Lawnside, Gt. Malvern, have put their unaided work into a very pleasing collection called *Windsong and Other Poems* (W. H. Smith & Son, 3s. 6d.). Their poems show a definite stirring of imagination, and much of the thought is delightfully unstereotyped. No doubt a good deal is due to the school's encouragement of poetry writing as well as the reading and speaking of it. This encouragement is endorsed in a preface, to which we would like to make one further suggestion: that the love of poetry is an intensifier of life rather than an escape from it, and a revealer of beauty hidden in everyday actualities.

ART AND MYSTICISM

THE insistence upon realism and materialism in the twentieth century is hampering and stultifying to creative art. Flights of fancy threaten to become organized marches along a dull and uninteresting road. Mysticism is allowed no place in modern life, everything must be set down as " fact " and judged from its practical aspect. Luckily, there are still authors who refuse to accept this view and who are striving to reveal the mystery of Art, Imagination and Beauty. Katherine M. Wilson, M.A., Ph.D. (Cantab), in her book *Thought and Imagination in Art and Life* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 7s. 6d. net) contributes a valuable study of modern mysticism related closely to human life. The book expresses no new philosophy ; much of its matter is very debatable and apparently dogmatic. But the author confesses in her Introduction that she has " stated as facts much that in their nature can only be opinions." It is as well that she tells us that !

The first part of the book deals with " Thought and Imagination in Art." The connection between thought and poetry is discussed. " Poets," proclaims the author, " are generally illogical ; the ideal poet is not the ideal philosopher,"—surely he was never meant to be. The greatest poets are the onlookers who see all but rarely attempt to preach to the world ; they explain and illustrate ideas. The study of imagination in poets is illuminating. The influence of the spiritual upon Wordsworth produced *Tintern Abbey* and his other finer works. Miss Wilson differentiates between reason and imagination—"Reason is the eye of the intellect, Imagination the eye of the spirit." This definition elucidates much that is puzzling in the work of imaginative poets. The whole of this chapter is well-written ; the language is simple and the thought profound.

But the author's opinion of Shelley's imaginative power is not so convincing. " Shelley's conception of the ideal is as fine as Wordsworth's yet Shelley's poetry is less good." Many people would justifiably dispute this statement. The distinction between his fancy and his imagination is not convincing, and it will not be universally agreed that " his conveyance of meaning and feeling by music is by purely physical skill."

Miss Wilson apparently finds more to admire in Tennyson. She obviously considers him one of the greatest of poets. " It is not really true that the greatest poets voice their Age," says she apologetically ! While she admits his Victorianism, she does not allow its influence upon his poetry. To esteem Tennyson more than Shelley is rather partisan.

The book as a whole is a clever psychological study. The section dealing with children's stories and their popularity is based on detailed observation and is helpful. True, much that is written for children is more appreciated by adults but in spite of Miss Wilson, few children can fail to yield to the spell of Lewis Carroll ! Finally, delving more deeply into life's problems, the book deals with Love, its forms and its peculiarities. Morality is discussed with penetrating insight, and the consoling thought, "we believe in immortality because we are immortal" concludes the book. To justify this, we are told that "if there were no other way, we should make ourselves immortal by believing ourselves so." Obviously, it is easy to believe what one wants to believe but this is no proof of truth. This book is provocative. It may not convince but it must impress.

The wide comprehension of Shakespeare is so amazing that there seems to have been no aspect of life that he did not understand. He wrote no books on psychology but there has never been an abler psychologist. *Shakespeare and Psychology* is the subject of another book by Cumberland Clark (Williams and Norgate, 7s. 6d. net) where this ability is examined carefully and explained intelligibly. The characters of the plays are dealt with as psychological studies and the human characteristics they all display are brought to notice. Apparent inconsistencies: the strange behaviour of Lady Macbeth when shrinking from the killing of Duncan; the lack of exaggerated enthusiasm in Cordelia's expression of devotion to King Lear—are explained in terms of psychology. The book reveals that its author not only knows the Shakespeare plays and sonnets but is able to analyse them intelligently. Yet, the book is somewhat tedious. The arrangement is annoying, characters are not dealt with exhaustively in one chapter but keep on recurring. There is a lack of unity and the large part of the book devoted to abnormality upsets the balance. The author seems to be unable to decide whether he is analysing Shakespeare himself or the characters created by him. He attempts both and the result is muddled. Modern psychologists, too, are dealt with at length and interesting as the information regarding them may be, it is not completely relevant. An admirable conclusion does much to annul the preceding disunity. The author is to be congratulated upon his use of simple language, his extensive knowledge of his subject and his analytical qualities.

Again in connection with mysticism, Macmillans have produced a beautiful volume of the collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore (12s. 6d.) net. All the work has been previously published, but admirers of this facile writer will appreciate the completeness of this volume. Tagore is a powerful exponent of the mysticism of the East, while his complete mastery of the English language produces lyrical prose and poetry of haunting loveliness at times. Much that is written in prose has the quality of poetical writing: as in the *First Jasmines*, "Autumn sunsets have come to me at the end of a road in the lonely waste, like a bride raising her veil to accept her lover." Occasionally these fragmentary pieces are obscure and it is difficult to understand the purpose of the passage, but always the language is beautiful. Such is the love of words for their own sake that the writer displays verbosity at times.

The plays in the book have a technique that is unusual. In the

Cycle of Spring, for example, the names of the speakers are omitted as the author asserts that they are easily guessed! This assumption is hardly justified. The characterization throughout is excellent, particularly in *The Post Office* which is human and appealing.

As a lover of peace, Rabindranath Tagore claims an important place in a world tired of warfare but incapable, it seems, of eliminating it. His *Sacrifice* is a play all should read in these troubled days: " Away with these our impotent dreams that harden into stones, burdening our world."

It is regrettable that Miss Ruth Pitter found it necessary to employ Mr. James Stephens to write a preface to her book of poems *A Trophy of Arms* (The Cresset Press, 5s. net). His prose is far from " pure "—an attribute he endeavours to yield to the author; it is clumsy, obscure and badly written in parts as when he describes poetry and prose as being " of different wave lengths, with nothing in common except words.' Few people can possibly agree that Miss Pitter is " next to that fine artist W. B. Yeats," although she is undoubtedly a good poet. Nor is the term " the purest poet of our day " a happy choice: purity in words is impossible, the wheat and the chaff are inevitably mixed, and merit is accorded to him who contrives to eliminate as much chaff as possible. More than purity is necessary for great poetry,—vitality, warmth and sympathy must be there.

There is a clear cut simplicity in this book. The author consistently uses simple words yet there is depth in her work which insists upon concentration and understanding from her readers. A cursory reading of her poetry is useless. She uses her power of penetration to explain the world as it is to men without the rose-coloured spectacles of illusion. She is wary of idealism:

> " I see Mankind, how it is vile
> A cruel Pain,"

but she is not content to accept this view as final:

> " I'll wander on
> Till Lucifer be Hesper in the West
> And wrapped in gold,
> I, the world's innocence upon the breast
> Of God behold."

She believes in the final achievement of freedom after a long pursuit of truth unhampered by personal feeling. She sings of the " translated spirits " attaining their goal after an uphill climb. She warns herself and her readers against an easy acceptance of creed or dogma,—

> " Let me not fly
> Hence into any madness, any creed,"

but she does not adopt a negative attitude. She is prepared to fight to attain her final goal. The name of the book is peculiarly apt in this connection. The technique of the poems is good, she exercises remarkable restraint but is not strikingly original. Her use of simile and metaphor is very effective: "Heaven is stillness, motion Hell," and her rhythm and harmony are uniformly excellent.

To those who find in nature an interpretation of living, a mental refreshment from the overburdening cares of life or a spiritual uplifting, Viola Meynell has given a precious gift in *The Poet's Way* (Cape, 7s. 6d. net), a comprehensive collection of nature poetry of all ages. Mingled with such well-established favourites as Shelley's " Ode to the West Wind " are less known but valuable poems of nature lovers and observers. This catholic collection, however, does not maintain a consistently high standard of poetry, which lessens the value of the literary content of the book. The extracts are carefully classified into subject matter by sectional headings—Night, Winter, Nature and Man, etc., but a complete lack of date and bibliography is annoying.

Ada Hamlyn Harris also has heard the call of nature, this time from Australian shores. In her book *White Magic* (Arthur Barron, 3s. 6d. net) she demonstrates her perceptive power, her rhythmic sense and a very sincere love of the natural world. At times, she is irritating, as in her frequent use of the adjective " woodsy " which is far from being poetical, and she has a tendency to repeat an effective simile or description. Apart from the lyrical beauty of the nature poems, in " The Eternal Now " this poet reveals a well-thought out and lucid philosophy of living in the present for the present, which is invigorating although controversial. Very weak rhyming such as " flow " and " now " occurring three times spoils the harmony of the poem but it has movement and colour. The songs in the longer poem " The Vision of the Lake," are its weakest feature; the one dealing with love's philosophy is in too sing-song a rhythm for the thought expressed.

ENID W. MARK.

LEARNING AND LIFE.

What is the proper content of poetry: the true subject matter of poems? As many answers as the sky has planets may claim consideration, but is not life the sky itself: which must be beneath and above and around any writing which would be called poetry? Life in language, life in form, above all life in content is the star mark of poetry as distinct from verse. In *The Flesh of Cypris*, nine poems by John Gawsworth (E. H. Samuel, 6s.) there is life in language, form and content. The same is not felt about the illustrations to the poems, which are too stylized drawings by Frederick Carter. The artist does not seem to have been sufficiently in communion with the poet's mind: the reader feels that he is striving to startle rather than interpret. *Poems of A Verse Club*, 1929–36 (The Ditchling Press), is the selected work of contemporary poets some or all well-known to The Poetry Society. The standard in form and language is high, if a little more boldness might be wished for; and there is life in the content of the poems. One hopes that the Club will not allow seven years to elapse before another selection of its members' poems is placed before the public. *Mimed Ballads and Stories* by M. Gertrude

Pickersgill, Principal of the London School of Dramatic Art (Pitman's, 2s. 6d.) is a book easily recognizable as the work of an authority in drama, and should be valuable to all teachers of drama and to amateur producers: to whom the low price will be a blessing. Its contents are traditional: it contains complete descriptions (with clear drawings of mime actions and position diagram) of how to mime "Where Are You Going, My Pretty Maid," "Robin Hood and Allan-A-Dale," "Sir Patrick Spens," and "The Princess and the Swineherd." The mimes may be taken by any number of mimers, the characters ranging from two to ten. The whole book is concise and practical.

The Poetical Works of Robert Bridges in the Oxford Editions of Standard Authors (3s. 6d.), contains the poet's writings excluding the eight dramas, and, with frontispiece portrait of Bridges, is pleasantly printed and inexpensive. It may well bring to all Bridges lovers a renewed feeling of the brotherhood of the poet to man, which Robert Bridges expresses in the line: "My toil is for man's joy, his joy my own."

The Story of Psyche by Robert Gittings (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.) has life in its language, and in its form—four foot blank verse—but the reader is disappointed in the content. If a story of a traditional myth is retold, the characters and the setting must shout out with life to awaken the dead from their long grave, and the poet's characters seem to be the product of a scholarly rather than a creative mind. Learning has here proved life's enemy instead of her living friend.

C.B.T.

MR. ALFRED NOYES'S TRILOGY

The appearance of Mr. Alfred Noyes' three volumes of *The Torch-Bearers* under one cover (Sheed and Ward, 7s. 6d.) is to be approved in more ways than one. Not only will the book now be upon many more bookshelves, but the continuity of the theme is emphasized and its sustained power made more evident. In the last section the link of actual experience on board ship is now a means for focussing the whole development of scientific truth as a single procession of event and thought, each biographical vignette falling into place and contributing something to the final deductions. The proofs of "Design" stand out with additional clarity, and the long beautiful "Dedication" at the end has a new intensity:

> . . . I saw that strange procession winding
>   On through a veil that shielded my vain sight
> From the absolute Dark that would have drowned me
>   At the first dreadful touch of absolute Light.
>
> Yet I saw glory on glory on glory
>   Burning through those ethereal folds
> Dusked by a myriad dawns, a myriad sunsets
>   With smouldering mercies, merciful blood-red golds.

Before it smoked the Eternal Altar
  Branched with great trembling lights that shone
As though at last all stars, all constellations,
  Had swung to their true place before God's throne. . . .

In a much smaller way Dr. T. Wilson Parry has set out a sequence of biographical sonnets in *Immortal Names and Other Poems* (Mitre Press, 5s.) on scientists and poets, the followers of Aesculapius in particular. His verse is neat and competent rather than intense. Some of the selected quotations at the headings are excellently chosen, and one is amazed to find how the spirit of the Hippocratic Oath pervades the practice of Medicine to-day. Dr. Parry sums it up in his sonnet on Hippocrates :

From man-god Aesculapius he came—
  Hippocrates, the first physician,
  Father of all Physicians, Super-Man
Who gave rude Medicine her first science claim.
To Cos and Cnidus went the ill and maim
  To see the master and to learn his ban
  On priestcraft. Here was no coarse charlatan,
No amulet would his just cause defame !

All superstitions he condemned as crude :
  His bed-rock principles—Ethics and Fact—
  With purity shall each physician act,
No thought of self, all for his patient's good—
This the great bond of the new Brotherhood—
  So ran the ancient Hippocratic pact.

Someone wrote a letter to the newspaper the other day saying it was quite time that Heber's slur on Ceylon was removed : " Though every prospect pleases And only man is vile." Almost as if in response there has appeared a book, *Vita-Magistra* (Ass. Newspapers of Ceylon, 3s.) in which W. S. Senior, a well-known scholar and missionary, sings the praises of that island in addition to writing many lyrical recollections of earlier days in England. The inhabitants are well eulogised in " Resurgam " :

Fair in the hills the Kandyan halls,
  Proud hearths of ancient name ;
The strength and grace of the Lion race,
  The Lion that none shall tame.

Fair is the stripling, lithe and strong
  With the strength of his father's arm,
His brown eye bright with its mother-light ;
  God shield the lad from harm !

Fair is the maiden, passing fair
Of foot, and form, and face,
With her dresses rare, and her jewelled hair;
God crown her with His grace! . . .

Pushkin is naturally in the foreground during the year of his tercentenary, and his *Eugene Onegin* has just been translated by Dorothea Prall Rodin and George Z. Patrick (Univ. of California Press and Cambridge U.P. 11s. 6d.). His best known narrative poem is in the present treatment "a shade Byronic"; though the metric and rhyming pattern, cleverly approaching the difficult original, is different, and the attitude to life and especially to women is moral and tender, there is something akin to Byron in the half flippant seriousness and confidential asides which can be felt rather than described. The stanzas recording the daily habits of Eugene and Juan will make the similarity evident:

But wearied of the evening's turmoil,
Turning the morning into night,
The child of luxury and pleasure
Sleeps softly in the shaded light.
Then well past midday he awakes
To lead again till morning breaks
His life monotonous though gay,
To-morrow like its yesterday . . .
A sickness—for its cure and treatment
We ought to find the formula—
The thing they call the spleen in England,
Our Russian hypochondria,
Had mastered him by slow degrees;
And though, thank God, it did not please
The youth to blow his brains out, still
Life was a desert, dark and chill.
So, like Childe Harold, steeped in gloom,
Oblivious to the allure
Of gossip, boston, sighs demure,
He would pass through a drawing room
Observing nothing that was there,
Nor altering his cheerless air.

Then Juan:

His morns he passed in business—which dissected,
Was like all business, a laborious nothing
That leads to lassitude. . . .

His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,
Lounging and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons

Called " Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings. . . .

Mr. W. B. Yeats included some of Margot Ruddock's poems in his anthology of modern verse, and he has sponsored a small volume of them, *The Lemon Tree* (Dent, 2s. 6d.). Their intensity of feeling was well emphasized when she read them one Wednesday in the Poetry Society's library. " Autumn, Crystal Eye " gives something of her introspection, while her notes of strange biography, which should be read with Mr. Yeats' preface, give a clue to her inner experiences.

Autumn, Crystal eye,
Look on me,
Passion chilled am I
Like to thee,

Seeking sterner truth
Even now
Longing for the white
Frozen bough.

Other readers associated with these Wednesday Readings appear in an anthology from Richards (3s. 6.)—Neo-Georgian Poetry 1936–1937—John Gawsworth, Herbert Palmer, Anna Wickham, Ruth Pitter, A. S. J. Tesismond, W. R. Childe, E. H. W. Meyerstein and E. H. Visiak. The awarding of the Hawthornden Prize last month to Miss Ruth Pitter will be acclaimed by many, not only because poetry has been honoured once more but also because Miss Pitter's work is of unusual sensitiveness and signifiance. She has several poems in this collection of distinctive poems, the most memorable of which is " An Old Woman Speaks of the Moon " :

She was urgent to speak of the moon : she offered delight
And wondering praise to be shared by the girl in the shop,
Lauding the goddess who blessed her each sleepless night,
Greater and brighter till full : but the girl could not stop.
She turned and looked up in my face, and hastened to cry
How beautiful was the orb, how the constant glow
Comforted in the cold night the old waking eye ;
How fortunate she, whose lodging was placed that so
She in the lonely night, in her lonely age,
She from her poor lean bed might behold the undying
Letter of loveliness written on heaven's page,
The sharp silver arrows leap down to where she was lying.
The dying spoke love to the immortal, the foul to the fair,
The withered to the still-flowering, the bound to the free,
The nipped worm to the silver swan that sails in the air :
And I took it as good, and a happy omen to me.

A sense of humour, in Scots and English, and a quick production of verse are the most noticeable features of Frank Erskine in *Dream Pedlary* (Celandine Pub. Co., 2s. 6d.). One can almost calculate the hour of birth of each poem, for they are all dated between November 12th and 26th of last year!

In his preface to *Einion Clyd* (Stockwell, 2s. 6d.) Jonathan Argoed Pugh states: "This poem gathers round the exploits and death of a typical Welsh Chieftain." The narrative is clearly told in the jingle of a pseudo-ballad of which these stanzas render the climax:

Now from his horse spring Wigmore's lord,
  By fiendish passion hurried,
To loud acclaim, his craven sword
  In Einion's corse is buried.

But Einion's soul is borne the while
  O'er Death's uncharted river,
To that remote and happy isle
  Where evil triumphs never.

Another fluent narrative is given in the title poem of *Initiation and Other Poems*, by Arthur Stamford (Stockwell, 1s. 6d.), the subject being that of the vigil of an Egyptian prince the night before his coronation. Its iambic tetrameter (a metre which Brewer reminds us is of "dangerously easy construction") is effectively tightened by the use of an extra foot in the eighth line of each stanza.

The publication of F. W. Lister's arresting novel *Shadow over Spennylam* (Frederick Muller, Ltd., 7s. 6d.) coincided with the publication in *The Times* of the moving Coronation lyric by Dean Alington, appositely quoted by the Chairman at The Poetry Society's birthday luncheon—"Spennymoor, Pelaw, Pity Me." The former is an expansion of the latter—a refreshingly tender and kindly presentation of humble life in a "depressed area" where, as we know, depression has not stifled the humanities, where there is less bitterness and hopelessness than among the modernist Bloomsbury poets, to whom and to certain sociological observers we suggest as a corrective Mr. Lister's vivid, intimate homely epic, written with a poet's discernment and sympathy and with the knowledge and understanding of the man on the spot.

Another poet's novel that moves quietly and convincingly and is a transcript of life written by an artist who knows and feels and understands and respects his creatures, is *The Porch* by Richard Church (Dent, 7s. 6d.). Mr. Church's prose, like his characters, is limpid and sincere and unaffected, and when the brave, sick, life-tortured Mouncer "drops into poetry" it is poetry and the atmosphere of poetry to which we are introduced, a brilliant, mature and inevitable performance.

No. 935 in Everyman's Library (Dent, 2s.) is an Aldous Huxley volume, containing a selection of his poems as well as stories and essays. It is significant that only ten pages out of 418 are devoted to the poems of this characteristic modernist who has profoundly influenced his adolescent contemporaries and been responsible for a cacophonous imitation of his cynical " sound of simian mirth."

No. 937 in this invaluable series is a new collection of *English Religious Verse* with a penetrating introduction by the compiler. G. Lacey May, who points out that the anthology " is in some measure a record of English religious feeling, beginning with the childlike faith of the Middle Ages, it passes into the Renaissance elaboration of religious fancy, and thence, in turn, to the more questioning mood of the Victorians and moderns." The latter are neither complete nor comprehensive, for, as Mr. May recognizes, many modern poets who bulk largely in the public mind deny Carlyle's conception of the poet as a seer who has a keener and deeper insight than most into the great realities—one who has seen visions and is aflame to impart them to others, to express like the old mystics and like Chesterton in our time their hungering for God Whose beauty lies behind all beauty, Whose sympathy lies behind all human sorrow and joy, Whose wisdom lies behind all human thought. Instead they regard their function as simply that of self-expression, seeing only petty Zolaesque details of the daily world and its inanities or sordidness, unredeemed by any vision, purveyors of popular thought, busy with realism. Mr. May is able to quote a few who are not renegades or who have returned to exercise their true purpose and mission, and he recognizes that there are, as we know, others too who have not turned their backs on the world yet whose short lyric outbursts have opened out to gladdened eyes vistas of the eternal Presence in the transitories of common things, in muscular strength and motherhood and daily toil, in crowded streets and suffering animals, in self-sacrifice and war, and that the Word is perpetually being made alive. Hence, this is a welcome book, most properly and discerningly edited, although we think the compiler contradicts himself when he declares " poetry has lost favour in our generation " and that " J. E. Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy* interprets our world better than Wordsworth's *Excursion*."

The remarkable defence and exaltation of Swinburne by Mr. Randolph Hughes, referred to at the unique Swinburne Centenary meeting reported on page 264, occupies forty-three pages in the forefront of the June *Nineteenth Century and After* and a French version is appearing in *La Revue Universelle*. Mr. Hughes has examined the vast mass of prejudiced and derogatory criticism in English, French, German and Italian since the appearance of *Atalanta*,and very trenchantly opposes it in a survey that all who wish to have more than a biassed and ephemeral conception of a great man should read. He finds in Swinburne the underlying and governing trend of true poetry—

independence, rhythm, music, mystery, dream, vision, something transrational and transcendental, with as much thought as in Browning, and, as essential philosophy, the doctrine that Man, or rather the Soul of Man, is God.

Mr. Hughes considers that " the contemporary indifference regarding him is chiefly explicable by the fact that poetry to-day has left the great highway and has lost itself in side-tracks. Three main provinces of activity are at present discernible. First, there are the spasmodic and incoherent efforts of the Superrealists ; the great fault of these writers is that they naïvely accept anything that the ' Subconscious ' (a comprehensive thing upon which can be fathered practically all things rational and absurd) chooses at any moment of sanity, inebriation or ill-health to throw up ; nor realizing that what emerges from it can at the best be only material for art and not art itself. Then there are those who would harness poetry (with or without form—mostly without) to some ideology or other ; to democracy, labour, communism, the sufferings and aspirations of the proletariat, the vapours and odours of the slums ; this, of course, is simply a return by another route to the conception of Matthew Arnold and Plato. Lastly, there are those who, with or without attachment to ideologies, preconise a departure from strict form and high music : mostly, it is to be guessed, because their capacities are not equal to such things. Perhaps the chief representative of this school is the American writer Mr. T. S. Eliot. The fact that he has won so much respectful attention in British countries is a measure of the decadence of the times in which we live. Beneath all his carefully arranged trappings of European culture there is the spirit of America. And this spirit is, in so far as European culture is concerned, a spirit of disintegration. It is probably a much greater menace to the old world than anything which has its origin in Russia. In the case of Mr. Eliot and his disciples the disintegration is directed towards the two most precious elements of European culture. But those two things, high music and strict form, are too fundamental a part of the European genius to be eradicated. They are bound to assert and impose themselves again with renewed force, and that is why Swinburne's glory is assured so long as Europe survives. And the idea of pure poetry is also bound to make headway, because it proceeds from a major truth, and represents one of the more imperative demands of the human spirit. That is another reason why Swinburne's glory is sure to survive and increase with the years—when the stammerings and lispings and cacophonies and posturings and Bœotian theories and pretensions of contemporary poeticules and their expounders and showmen shall have been consigned to the place which is their due."

Mr. Hughes makes a vigorous protest against the suppression or bowdlerization of both verse and prose, and the consequent ill-fame attached to Swinburne, remarking that some of these particular MSS. that have been printed privately are found to be " far more respectable than passages of Aristophanes, Catullus and Rabelais, which are put into the hands of the male and female young and are much more respectable than that ludicrously overrated *pasticcio*, hotchpotch or compost of mostly borrowed patches called *Ulysses*, which is well known to enjoy a circulation that extends almost to the manse and the schoolroom."

Mr. Hughes thinks "it is possible that in the future not a few people will go to Swinburne's work as Prof. McTaggart did, as to a sort of Bible, discovering in it sources of moral and philosophical as well as of purely poetical power. But it is chiefly on account of this last that his position is assured to him, and that position is among the spiritual supremacies of the world. It will be more and more recognized that he is the greatest lyric poet in literature, which is perhaps much the same as saying that he is the greatest poet *tout court*." Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in a passage prefixed to this bold essay, speaks of "the holy rites of the Word." Mr. Hughes insists that that is the religion to which Swinburne gave the best of himself, that "altogether, he is the most assiduous servant, the most considerable master of the mysteries of the Word that has ever lived."

* * * *

It has been very gratifying to receive, lately, warm expressions of interest and good will from many American members. In particular Miss Mary Coles Carrington, Richmond, Virginia, for many years a distinguished vice-president and representative of The Poetry Society in that original New England style assures us: The beauty, dignity and wisdom of The Poetry Review make it a joy to lovers of good poetry; I look forward eagerly to its illuminating articles and fine verse. In the current issue I especially admire "The Last Thing at Night" by Vera I. Arlett; it is a sensitive and lovely poem.

From Mrs. Malcolm Robb of Webster Groves, Missouri: I still enjoy the Review immensely and also the articles pertaining to the proper form of poetry. Your policy is so sane.

Miss Virginia Raplee, of Broadway, New York, when renewing her membership subscription, is glad "to take this opportunity to tell you how very much I enjoy and value The Poetry Review. It is a superior publication, well above the average poetry magazine. Not only are the poems of excellent workmanship, but the articles are illuminating and delightful reading. Once having enjoyed the Review, I think no poet, or lover of good poetry, could afford to be without it. Through the Review, one may become acquainted with the work of many poets hitherto unread, and, as an instance, I mention a review by Mr. Ronald Fuller of the poems of John Lehmann, which was contained in the issue for January–February of this year. Mr. Fuller's article was so stimulating that I forthwith sent to London for Mr. Lehmann's book, which I have since read many times, with considerable pleasure."

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

In this competition no preference is given to any particular fashion or school of poetry. Two out of our three awards this time are given in favour of work which presents certain difficulties to the reader, but is well worth while when these have been overcome.

Our awards are to N. K. Cruickshank, E. Radcliffe Binnington, and Arthur Lynnford-Smith.

Highly Commended :

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
Vera Arlett, Worthing ;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth ;
H. Escott, Bradford ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Clifton ;
Lawrence W. Hockey, Newport, Mon. ;
Ada Lawry, Broadstairs ;
Stella Primrose, Gerrard's Cross;
Joyce T. Rowe, London, N.W. ;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate ;
Janet Urquhart, London, S.W. ;
Molly Walker, Ripon ;
Ethel Walter, Bradford ;
Phyllis Dulce Warwick, Newark.

Commended :

Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood ;
Langford Budville, Worthing ;
John Cannings, Melksham ;
T. E. Casson, Ulverston ;
Alice E. Collinge, Bolton ;
G. A. Fitzgerald, Ipswich ;
Evelyn Couchman, Merton ;
Albert E. Dewey, London, W. ;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London;
Sophia Harbin, Yeovil ;
Chloris M. Heaton, Berkhamstead ;
Jean Hope, Newton Abbot ;
R. McKie, Hove ;
Marsh O'Raffa, Exeter ;
E. M. Mann, Dovercourt ;
Josephine May, Trimley St. Mary ;
Irene H. Moody, Vancouver ;
G. S. Oddy, Ryde ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
Nita H. Padwich, London ;
Phoebe Rayner, Rivington ;
Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri ;
I. Savurdranayagam, Colombo ;
Modwena Sedgwick, London;
Ruth Tenney, Streatley ;
Mabel K. Toovev, Amersham ;
Jessica Walters, London, W.

Sir Roger Newdigate's prize for English verse has this year been won by Miss Margaret Stanley-Wrench, of Somerville College, who contributed a notable poem, " To Apollo," to last November's Poetry Review. A woman undergraduate won the prize for the three years preceding 1930. Miss Stanley-Wrench, who is the daughter of Mrs. Mollie Stanley-Wrench, the author, is in her second year at Somerville. Last November, soon after she decided to enter for the prize, she was taken ill and spent some time in Radcliffe Infirmary. It was while she was convalescing that she sketched out her poem roughly. The subject of the poem this year was " The Man in the Moon."

Miss Stanley-Wrench says: "I did not go out and study the moon at nights to write my poem. It deals largely with folk-lore and legends concerning the 'Man in the Moon.' I have always been interested in folk-lore. It is not such a dry subject as some which have been set in previous years."

Our frequent contributor and reviewer, Mr. Edward Vandermere Fleming, C.B., wishes to test the advice which he is accustomed to urge upon young versifiers—to go beyond the "cat," "mat," "sat," stage, and to seek for polysyllabic rhymes, in which our language, though otherwise far less rich than Italian, abounds, and so give a wider chance to rhyme to prompt the fancy. He therefore offers what he calls "a crown of parsley, value one guinea," for a sonnet using the appended rhymes, the judge to be the Premium Editor or Mr. W. H. Stephens. (Young writers of verse should note that all the given rhymes are accurate and true. They might evoke an imaginative poem.)

magnificence
majestical
ceremonial
negligence
recompense

festival
funeral
reverence

hesitate

enterprise
immortalize
inviolate
awaken
forsaken

A useful list of publications that use occasional verse with some brief particulars of individual requirements, if any, will be found in 101 *Markets for Poems* (Stockwell, 3s. 6d.). But the list, which should be offered at a lower price with a more pertinent preface, is not complete and some of the papers do not constitute a market at all. By careful selection openings may be found, although the market is narrow and over-supplied, except for really distinctive work. At a recent "Tea and Talk" meeting Mr. Guy Boas mentioned that *English*, the new quarterly of The English Association, is open to talent, and a recent editor of *The Nineteenth Century* declared he would like to revive the proud Tennysonian tradition if he could get sufficiently good long poems. Several of our contributors have lately found acceptance in the *Windsor* and *Cornhill* and the *English Review*.

Members of the Poets' Fellowship who wish to attend a country meeting—probably on July 24th—are requested to apply to the Assistant-Editor for an invitation.

The usual premium competition is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before August 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

THE PROGRESS OF THE POETRY SOCIETY

The Annual General Business Meeting of The Poetry Society (Incorporated) was held at the offices of the Society, 36 Russell Square, W.C.1, on Tuesday, May 4th, with Mr. E. Vandermere Fleming, C.B., in the Chair.

The Treasurer (Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, J.P.), in presenting the audited accounts for the year 1936, said " we can again congratulate ourselves that the Society has fully justified itself in its work, and in extending its influence and prestige. From a financial point of view the receipts have not quite balanced the expenditure, but the present year should show an improved position. Additional expense has also been incurred during the year in extending our Audition efforts in the provinces, where our receipts could not be expected during the first year to pay all expenses. Our printing charges also necessarily show some considerable increase owing to our publishing 10,000 copies of our 6d. *Pocket Book of English Poetry*. Sales at present had not been sufficient to show profit, but it is anticipated that during the present year good financial results will accrue. The accounts generally show the Society in a highly satisfactory position. Our investments, valued at below present market quotations, appear at £1,535 in the Balance Sheet; the cost of lease and alterations has also been now entirely liquidated, and the Society's other assets, including the comprehensive library at a low valuation, amount to above £500.

" The future appears assured that the Society will worthily fulfil its increasing position and popularity as a centre of poetic culture."

The Financial Statement and Balance Sheet were adopted, and cordial thanks and appreciation expressed to the Treasurer for his continual and devoted services in the interests of the Society.

Messrs. Godwin and Taylor, Chartered Accountants, were re-elected Hon. Auditors, and thanked for their services.

The retiring members of the General Council—Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, Miss E. Bangay, the Viscountess Buckmaster, Capt. Cranmer Byng, the Hon. Phyllis Coleridge, the Earl of Cromer, Mr. E. Vandermere Fleming, Miss J. Huntsman, Mr. F. Irving-Taylor, Miss F. Jordan, Mr. W. Marshall, the Hon. Eleanour Norton, Mr. T. Weston Ramsey, Mr. C. B. L. Tennyson, were re-elected, with the addition of Lord Kennet, on the nomination of the Council, and the Overseas Representatives, Mrs. Rosenthal, Portugal; Mrs. Hunt Bartlett, U.S.A.; Mrs. Tasker, India; and Countess Van Bylandt, Holland.

In proposing votes of thanks to the Chairman and the retiring members of the Council and Centre officials for their services in maintaining the Society:

Miss A. R. Morison, O.B.E., referred to the Treasurer's remarks on the extension of the auditions, saying that her active association with this important work had increased her former deep sense of appreciation of the valuable and unique efforts and influence of The Poetry Society. They had great scope for development, particularly among public schools, which ought to be brought into closer working relations with The Poetry Society.

Miss Ilma Barnes, of Sydney, N.S.W., in seconding, stated that having been in close touch with the Society while in London, she was determined that the auditions should be extended to Australia, and also that centres should be formed there as part of the Society. It was extremely undesirable that local independent, sporadic organizations concerned with poetry should be promoted, when they had this one established, democratic body, with almost thirty years' work and experience behind it, able to give strength, security and permanency to the local groups that constituted The Poetry Society in their respective areas. The constitution of The Poetry Society provided for membership and effectiveness all over the world, and was able to meet all needs, and in its turn should be strengthened by the recognition and adhesion of all who were animated by serious interest in poetry, and its application to modern life, individual and educational.

Reports were received from various Centres, including Winnipeg (printed in the May POETRY REVIEW), Chicago, Boston, Hyderabad, Calcutta, Golders' Green, Shortlands, Clifton and Kensington (the latter two having passed their quarter century) and Reigate, which attains its majority this year.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON, on May 20th, at Princes, Piccadilly, was an eminently successful as well as representative affair—a notable event in a crowded week. The chair was occupied by Sir Campbell Mitchell-Cotts, Bart, V.P., who had taken a lively interest in promoting the event. In a comprehensive welcome from the chair he mentioned that Vancouver, Winnipeg, Boston, New Zealand, Australia and other overseas groups were represented and that among others present were the Bishop in Jerusalem (who said Grace), their most distinguished Vice-President, Lord Desborough (through whom they honoured the poetic fame of that great gentleman and soldier-poet, Julian Grenfell), the Duke and Duchess del Monte, Marchese Dorothy Imperiali, Mrs. Elinor Glyn, Madam Genée, the head of his old school, Dr. Cyril Norwood, Brigadier-General W. E. Seymour, Lady Seton-Karr, Mr. William Walker, A.R.E., V.P., Captain Burton Mackenzie of Kilcoy, the Hon. Phyllis Coleridge, V.P., the Hon. Mrs. Gillilan, Brigadier T. C. G. Heywood, Mr. and Mrs. David Horne of Blackadder, Sir Reginald Johnston, V.P., and other devoted friends of the Society. " This is our Coronation luncheon," he continued, "and the way you have all responded is wonderful, and I thank you. A Japanese poet, Mr. Gonnoské Komai, who is with us to-day, had a very fine Coronation poem in one of the Sunday newspapers last week. In proposing the toast of 'The King,' I should like to read to you another fine poem, which to me was particularly touching, written by Dean Alington who regrets that owing to increasing bad health he is prevented from being present. This little poem in

The Times is the crown of the Coronation poems, linking up the distressed areas of Durham with our ornate pageantry in London."

The Chairman continued, " You have been asked to drink the King's health particularly early in order that you might hear Miss Nancy Price, who has done so much for the advancement of poetry reading and also for a people's theatre, and who has to leave early to resume her essential part in *Whiteoaks*" (cheers).

Miss Nancy Price said, " I always think of the poet as the person who gives us spectacles because he makes us really see the beauty of this world. He gives us beauty and light and song, and we must be uncivilized indeed if there is not an echo of that song in our hearts.

" I know that poetry is appreciated and loved, not only by the so-called ' high-brow,' but also by the man in the street. One of the nicest things that ever happened to me was when I was giving a reading a man came in who looked very poor and ragged. I said to him: ' Do you really want to come in and hear poetry ? ' and he replied: ' Yes, that I do—Miss Nancy Price says it's "free".' And from a dirty inside shirt he brought a little volume of Keats.

" We have magnificent living poets to-day. I do not think we have ever been so rich in poetry as we are to-day. I try to get them encouragement. They say ' We must have our encouragement if we are to go on. We must have our poetry fostered. What is the use of the long obituary notices, and the expensive wreaths when we crush the little living nosegay, which means everything to us.' "

Dr. Cyril Norwood, President of St. John's College, Oxford, proposed the toast of Poetry.

Dr. Norwood said : " It is a very great honour to be entrusted with this toast, whether it be the toast of poetry or whether, as I was told, ' the place of poetry in education.' In any case it is a vast subject, and I feel like a very little vessel on a very large ocean.

" I think that one of the most wonderful things in education, and I speak as a schoolmaster, is to watch the change which occurs in a boy's mind when poetry really takes hold of him. It does not, of course, come with everybody, or even with the majority, but when it does come it is usually somewhere in the fifteenth or sixteenth year. Sometimes the awakening is due to music and sometimes due to art, and I hope I shall not offend anyone present when I say poetry is the greatest of all arts.

" When a boy is influenced by poetry you can see him wake up, not only to beauty, but to the tragedy and comedy of human life. You can see the gathering of a store of ideals and sympathies and principles by which he is going to live his whole life. For I believe that those who acquire a store of poetry like that acquire something that saves them from failure and from finding the uses of the world weary, stale, flat and profitable.

" A boy acquires a kingdom to which he can always resort and in which he reigns sole sovereign, and I believe that no one gains the mastery of that kingdom unless he acquires it in youth, and that is why this topic of poetry is so important.

" I remember the change it wrought in me when it happened in my life. How everything changed for me when I discovered that poetry had not only a meaning, and not only that but that it mattered intensely and was a golden key to happiness. The golden key for me was a copy of Tennyson's collected works. I must have been nearly sixteen. Thereafter my mind became almost all Tennyson. And I remember in 1892 the tremendous shock his death was to me,—something like the shock that Tennyson himself must have had when in 1824 he went down on to the shore and wrote on the sand the words, 'Byron is dead.' If a poem is produced by sincere emotion then the poem I wrote in 1892 was a genuine poem—I sent it to the *Westminster Gazette*, but it did not appear! Thereafter I surrendered to Shelley, Keats and then I settled down to Shakespeare. Wordsworth and Browning came much later.

"Each generation the same thing happens—each generation finds its own interpreters and generally scorns its immediate predecessors. What happened in my schoolboy heart is what is happening in the hearts of school boys and girls of the present time. Outwardly I played games and talked games—that was outside ;—inside my heart was singing lines from 'The Princess' and the stanzas of 'In Memoriam'—I did not let on that I liked poetry, save to my most intimate friends, nor that I was writing poetry: those days are nearly fifty years ago. Many changes have come since then. In the first place there are many more in the schools to-day who write poetry,—and on the whole they write it better. Of course, 99 per cent. of it is 'imitation,' but its technique is good. I receive many school magazines, and I always turn with interest to the poetry page. I want to learn what the young are feeling and thinking, and I can report that the standard is promising.

" The second phase is that they all write in their own name, and are proud of it. When I was at Harrow not so long ago a distinguished old Harrovian said to me, 'It is a remarkable thing; my boy has written a poem and published it above his name in the *Harrovian* How the school has changed! If I had done that I believe I should have had to leave my house.' As a measure of progress that story is true of every school in the country. I think that English and English poetry are better taught now than fifty years ago, but I am convinced that where æsthetic values are concerned you have to look out when you come into contact with the school, the schoolmaster, and the educational system. As farmers say, 'you have got good tilth,' and I believe that you are trying to work it in the right way—I quote from your own manifesto—'by the careful selection of competent teachers . . . and by greater regard being given to intelligent reading and speaking and to the use of the finest and most distinctive human organ, the voice,' you seek to secure more adequate recognition of the educative and formative value of poetry. You are right. Poetry is meant to be recited; to be read aloud, even to be sung. But there you come into conflict with our grand old educational curriculum and examination system.

"I do not mean to say that poetry is not now being better taught at the schools than it was a few years ago. I do think that things are better, but I remain convinced that where æsthetic values are concerned you have got to look out! Left to themselves, art schools and art masters turn out not artists, but a sort of apostolic succession of other art masters. As to poetry, left to themselves they killed it dead. They bring it down out of those airy regions where it thrives and pin it down on the setting board, with the killing-bottle and the forceps all ready.

"Their intentions are good; and a great deal of thought is given to teaching English literature; but I am afraid it remains a truth that, at the end of it all, poetry is something which cannot be taught in that sense. Of course, it is all made much worse by examinations, and the teaching of poetry, or rather the encouragement of the appreciation of poetry is still at the moment much hampered by examinations, and if the young have the idea that a long poem is something that has to be learnt as part of a lesson . . . with an introduction that has to be got up it will lose its charm and freshness.

"And therefore I think that the one great reform which you of The Poetry Society could press is that English should not be examined at all, save in the case of pupils who are past the ages of sixteen or seventeen. Let it be a matter of reading, speaking, reciting and acting. Boys and girls love acting; most of them take naturally to poetry; let their teacher be their guide, philosopher and friend, and they will learn to use their voices and speak and express their thoughts; and so grow in the sense of beauty and the deeper values of life.

"Schools will never be what they ought to be until they cease examinations in English. The ordinary boy and ordinary girl will leave school and never read another line of poetry as long as they live, and will not realize the real meaning of it in this life. And so, because I believe you are endeavouring to encourage the reading and speaking of poetry, I give you my tribute and goodwill."

Mr. Guy Kendall, who associated the toast of "Poetry" with the name of Mr. Lawrence Whistler, the King's Gold Medallist, as representative of the younger poets, said some of our poets claim to speak out of their unconscious minds. It is a dangerous picture as it implies the collapse of free association—that is to say in the case of a writer he makes his mind a blank to the external world and this is followed immediately by anything that enters the sub-conscious mind. But however he derived his inspiration or repudiated inspiration, or claimed to be purely intellectual, or attacked the intellect quite sorely, one odd thing is that the modern poet ultimately gives us some haunting phrases in a traditional manner, and it has become pretty plain that the normal basis of modern poetry is the old Hebrew manner. Similarity is found between the old Hebrew verse and (say) T. S. Eliot in *The Rock* when he is paraphrasing "Can you keep the City unless the Lord keeps with you?" Mr. Kendall proceeded to point out that the greatest test in all poetry is whether it can produce a great epic. We have had in recent years Robert Bridges' *Testament*; we have had great poems of other kinds. Mr. Lawrence Whistler has given us a great elegy: where will that epic come from? Will it come from the tortured fields of the politically uneasy young men, or will it come from Mr. Edmund Blunden, or will it come from Mr. Lawrence Whistler himself?

M. Emile Cammaerts made a charming and witty reply in the absence of Mr. Whistler, and in particular supported Dr. Norwood's remarks on poetry in education, warmly advocating the cultivation of the love of the spoken word, the poetry not only of music but of words. Some words were too beautiful to be used. One feels a wonder and awe when some words are used,—that word "awe" which expresses the feelings of a child when he sees something or hears something new. "Therefore do not say hard things against words, but think of the magic of the instrument which the poet uses, the *wonderful instrument of words*."

Mrs. Kenneth Graham, felicitously proposed the health of the Chairman, to a company composed of "friends of the poets," and proceeded to speak about poetry for children, insisting that there is no such thing as "poetry for children,"—there is only one "poetry." If "poetry for children," why not "poetry for solicitors" (laughter). She did not think it is necessary for children to understand poetry. A child she knew, to whom poetry was being read, was asked if he understood it, and replied, "Of course I do not understand, but go on, go on, don't stop."

Miss Martita Hunt, Miss Margaret Rawlings and Miss Greer Garson each read a favourite poem with characteristic beauty and personality, and Miss Delphine Petters spoke the two poems on which she had gained the Lady Margaret Medal this year.

The Chairman concluded his amiable office by expressing sympathy with Lady Snowden, who was to have spoken, on the loss of her husband—"a very great statesman and friend of this country," and mentioned the receipt of a very nice letter written in her own hand from Princess Marie Louise, who with other friends was only prevented from attending owing to the Naval Review at Spithead, finally sending greetings to that great speaker of English, Sir Johnstone Forbes Robertson, and that other famous master of the English language, Sir Frank Benson, who had helped so tremendously in establishing the Society's practical regard for the spoken word.

ON THE ART OF POETRY

THE art of poetry might be symbolized by the growth of a tree. Like roots hidden from the eye are the veiled minds of the poets, whence poetry, in its abstract sense of a unique class of literature, rises in a single trunk and bursts forth into a crowded display of foliage, like poetry in its practical sense of all the lines that have ever been surrendered to paper.

And there are as many aspects of poetry as there are angles from which a photographer, circling a tree inch by inch, withdrawing, approaching, kneeling, rising, might focus his lens upon it. Every impression will be honest yet peculiar to its own individuality and dissenting from every other. It is useless then to define poetry and add to this discordant band. But what remains is ever renewed effort to understand the art of poetry from the inside, the laws of its growth, as the naturalist traces sap from falling rain gathered in by the roots to the bursting of every bud. Efforts will be ever renewed because poetry is a vital force therefore as with the source of all life the final word is veiled.

Poetry is an art. Therefore it is a form of creation; artists and artisans are people who *make*. Moreover poetry is a Fine Art, that is to say it creates not for utility but to satisfy its own pre-determinate ends, and those ends, when we witness them accomplished, we term " beautiful." (Let it here be noted why throughout this essay in the interests of brevity and consistency the writer uses the terms " beauty " and " beautiful " when the reader may judge, especially with regard to the art of poetry, that " truth " and " true " be more apposite. It is done in the belief that, although from a metaphysical point of view beauty and truth are far from synonomous, the artist can justly say with Keats,

> Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty
> That is all ye know and all ye need to know.

—because art cannot achieve truth without being beautiful, nor attain beauty without being true.) Fine Art, then, means the creation of beauty supremely for beauty's sake.

The effect of beauty, said St. Thomas Aquinas, is what gives pleasure on perception, "id quod visum placet." We see a picture and because it gives us pleasure we know that it is beautiful; we read a poem and as it gives us joy we become aware of its beauty. Thus that in us which apprehends beauty is our faculty of *knowing*, that is the mind. Animals, though possessing higher senses than our own, have no perception of beauty because their plane of intelligence is too low. Beauty is a climax of the mind and further is elevated to that high order of intelligence which borders on the perception of things spiritual, for beauty is a transcendental. That is to say an object may appear beautiful to one man yet not to another of equal intelligence and artistic sense. Therefore beauty is beyond the bounds of fact or logic, it *transcends* human reason.

Thus art, since it is concerned with beauty, belongs primarily to the realm of the mind. Now the mind can only express beauty in two ways, by acting or by making. *Acting* beauty is sanctity, *making* beauty is art. The transferring of beauty from one mind to another through "making" demands the medium of matter.

Here we come to the at once immensely great and infinitely small part that the senses play in art. It is immensely great because without matter—be it words, harmony, paint, marble—art could have no form; and without the senses art could not be perceived: Beethoven, deaf, could create music but a deaf audience shall never applaud his creation. The part of the senses and of matter is at the same time infinitely small in comparison to the primary function of the mind. Thus perfect metre and immaculate rime may only produce verse while beauty, that is poetry, may walk clad in the ragged drapery of free verse or in prose: the Italian primitives painting their crude, unanatomical figures excelled in artistic purity the schools of nearly two hundred years later when the technique of painting in Italy had reached its climax: Pagannini, with only one string on his violin, could have made better music than a full orchestra whose minds were not charged with a musical perception of beauty. The fact that art aims at giving pleasure to the senses, in poetry seeking out tricks of alliteration, onomatopoeia and rime, is only because the senses are the means by which the mind will be served and the better the means are served, the better they in their turn will serve the mind. When, as in times of decadence, the artist tries to make the means an end in themselves, art deserts him because, as has already been pointed out, beauty demands a higher perception than that of the senses.

In the same way that the mind demands interpretation through the medium of matter, matter generally speaking demands a subject. Those poems that have been written and pictures which have been painted on no recognizable subject, but formulate only on the artist's fantasy run the risk of small appreciation because it is unlikely that other people's idea of fantasy, even supposing that they have one, will coincide sufficiently with the artist's for them to perceive the beauty embodied therein. But provided that the poem or picture has some subject, its nature is of no consequence, for the subjects possible to art are as innumerable as the hiding places where the artist may perceive beauty lurking, though evidently there are some subjects such as Nature, Love, etc., in which both for the artist and the art-lover beauty is more easily perceived than in others. Poetry, when it is working direct on some material object, as Shelley approached his sky-lark or Wordsworth his daffodils, bears this in common with painting, sculpture or any art which works direct from nature: the subject, be it say the dancing daffodils beside the lake which might serve either brush or pen, is no more an end in itself than is the pleasure of the senses an end in itself. The end of art is always beauty and nothing but beauty: if the daffodils serve only as the body into which the artist can pour the vital soul of beauty and thus give beauty sensible, and therefore intelligible life, then the poem or the picture is art. But if poet or painter cherishes the vain hope of reproducing on paper purely the *sensual sight* of the daffodils, which may have aroused him to joy, without any profounder, more intelligent feeling for beauty, and thereby sets himself to describe each breath of the wind and trace each leaf and petal, then the result is not art but imitation. Nature can only exist in art as long as it serves art. To quote St. Thomas Aquinas: "Operatio artis fundatur super operationem naturae, et haec super creationem."

Beauty is supremely jealous as the mistress of art; she must be the principal interest of its attentions. Poetry having its medium in words, has in addition to tangible subjects the unlimited scope of abstract ones such as faith, duty, etc. But these too can only exist for art as long as they serve it. Doctrines and morals may be expressed by poetry and move people so deeply as to effect their way of living, but the man who sets himself to clothe a creed in verse in order to convert the world writes not poetry but propaganda.

We have noted the effect on the onlooker of beauty as the end of art. We have surveyed the exigencies of beauty over the means of art. That is to say, in returning to the metaphor of the tree, we have acknowledged the sap in the foliage and traced the laws whence it expands from the trunk.

It remains to go below the surface and examine the artist's mind.

What then is his conception of beauty, that is to say what is, not the effect as previously discussed, but the nature of beauty. It is reasonable in answer to follow St. Thomas's deduction that as beauty delights the mind it is made up of that which pleases the mind, and to repeat his familiar definition of the three virtues which constitute what pleases the mind: i.e., *radiance* (because the mind likes light and intelligibility), *proportion* (because the mind likes order) and *integrity* (because the mind likes perfection or wholeness). This then applied to poetry involves the poet in the following considerations in the creation of his poem.

First the poem must have radiance, that is, the high order of intelligibility or lucidity which appeals to that supreme part of the mind capable of perceiving transcendentals, a radiance beyond the grasp of ordinary reason. Milton refers to the poet "soaring in the *high reason* of his fancies, with his garland and his singing robes about him." This is "that fine madness" which Drayton said "rightly should possess a poet's brain," and, of which Macaulay wrote on Milton, "perhaps no person can be a poet, or even enjoy poetry without a certain unsoundness of mind," and to quote Drayton again of Marlowe,

> Had in him those brave *translumary* things
> That the first poets had.

("First poets" here referred to are the equivalent of "primitives" in painting, those who are remembered because their devotion to the spirit outweighed an innocent technique.) The poet therefore must give his poem that touch of divinity which is its life-spirit.

Secondly the poem must have proportion, that is order and reason within itself. It must contain no phrase which is unreasonable, and therefore superfluous to its essential meaning. It must obey human logic in so far as human logic can serve the divine, limitless reason referred to above. Thus poetry must transcend human logic but may not offend it. This apparent incompatibility solves itself more easily perhaps in illustration. Shelley, for example, in addressing a whole poem to a skylark, confounds human understanding in his opening declaration, "Bird thou never wert." But supposing a writer, eulogizing a bird, wanted in the interests of the beauty of his poem to insert the line, "When thou alightest on the water," human logic would demand that he addressed his poem not to a lark but to a water-bird. The question of whether the bird that Shelley hailed was, or was not, is beyond ordinary reason, but the question of the buoyancy of water is well within its grasp and therefore it demands that a bird, be it in poetry or elsewhere, that alights on water should be one that is logically equipped to do so. The poet therefore must give his poem reason.

Thirdly the poem must have integrity. That is to say that while proportion has insured that nothing shall be superfluous, integrity assures that the poem is whole, sufficient, perfect in itself—"a poem round and perfect as a star." This involves that the framework of the poem shall be such that the deletion of a word would be like the infliction of a wound, and the omission of a stanza like the loss of a limb. The poet must give his poem balanced form.

Radiance, proportion, integrity make the work of artists in general—spirit, reason, form that of poets in particular. We have only to remind ourselves what constitutes man, i.e., soul, mind, body, to realize upon what the artist's creative work is modelled.

> God is the perfect poet,
> Who in his own person acts his own creations,

remarked Browning. In the tangible world, man is the most spiritual of God's creations and art is the most spiritual creation of man who was made in the likeness of the Creator. So art pleases because as has already been noted, it in its turn is made in the likeness of the mind of man and so retains its original source of vitality. " Poesy," says Bacon, " was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind."

If finally we ask ourselves of the poet, not what he makes, how he makes it, what his conception is, but whence in the first place he receives the inspiration to make poetry at all, then the answer is from the same source, the source of all creation.

> By heaven, and heaven alone
> The genuine seeds of poesy are sown,

wrote Pope.

God created the World, God is Love, Love in spiritual terms means creative force. Hatred dissipates and destroys, love vitalizes, binds together and sustains. It is because a poet *loves* his subject that he is akin to its beauty. " A poet without love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility " said Carlyle of Burns. And again, Bailey,

> Poets are all who love, who feel great truths
> And tell them ; and the truth of truths is Love.

Thus poets feed on heaven as trees are nourished by the sun and rain. And as the leaves of a tree are coloured by chlorophyll, which so gives substance to the vital force of light that animals may feed thereon and live, so is the high calling of the poet that his work may radiate with the life-breath of the spirit and give intelligible substance to the things of heaven.

Perhaps in this context Pope's lines might be repeated, though without altogether forgetting from what keen pen they came,

> Vain were the chief's and the sage's pride
> They had no poet and they died.

DAPHNE BINNY.

ALONE

One of the Songs of Chi Yu from " The Books of Chi Yu."

I WAS alone,
but loneliness afar!
The stars shone.
And I lay stilled
with wonder filled
in silences of night.

Never the grasses whispered,
never the branches sighed;
The wind was sleeping
the tide was weeping;
only the ebbing flood
pulsed by the crescent moon—
vast ocean's heart—
perceived the poignant fissure
breaking full soon.

But all the ebbing flood
knew well that life is fled—
like body bled
of rich, red, vibrant blood—
when tide and sickled moon
together exit make
and leave the cliff bereaved,
unkissed to wake
beneath a darkened sky.

J. YOULE.

ROCKEFELLER CENTRE

To the late John D. Rockefeller, sen., New York City.

BEHOLD a temple built with hands,
A fellowship of Fatherlands
Where braziers of Promethean fire
Burn golden as the soul's desire!
Stone upon stone and line on line
Stands for his Maker man's design,
Fane on fane, three-score and ten,
In number as the years of men.
In beauty held, in beauty wrought,
Behold the crucible of thought!
Here is creation's message told,
Here are life's lessons, ages old,
And here, begot of wisdom's well,
Spring truths the unborn years foretell.
So shines afar the visioned ray
Of mastery o'er the toil of day,
So victory, that quenchless light
Of man's endeavour, conquers night,
And so in man his Maker's breath
Lifts inspiration over death,
Gives mortal aim immortal power
And proves the Godhead by his hour!

C. E. H. JACOBS.

THE PAGEANT OF THE YEAR

FLOW chill, black stream, and sleep, snow-sheeted field,
Till February rains bid frost-chains yield;
Till winds of blustering March rive down the hill,
And crocus welcomes April daffodil.
Let blossomed May with lambs white-spot the day,
Let perfumed June bring roses and mown hay.
To hail July heap every hedge with bloom;
Let golden August watch the harvest home.
Bring for September apples, cushioned plums,
As, crowned with Autumn leaves October comes;
And let November, mournful month of mist
Reveal the silver month that Christ has kissed.

ETHEL WALTER.

THE POSITION OF POETRY IN SCOTLAND TO-DAY

IN some ways it is not surprising that Scotland, with so many potentialities for poetic wealth, should have produced so few poets, for many things in the past have militated against poetry. Nor is it at all strange that Scotland should have suffered severely from a "kail-yard" school, for the Scot is a sentimental creature and, given a little encouragement, an undeveloped critical sense, and an admiring audience (particularly the admiring audience), he is quite capable of producing slush and calling it poetry. Nevertheless it is curious that in all the ages of barrenness no Scot was born with sufficient inherent taste, and genius, to realize the possibilities, to stand fast for beauty and sincerity, to go forward and create in spite of audience or lack of it. Even Burns was limited through want of culture and background, though for his particular gifts these things did not really matter. He probably got nearer to the hearts of the people without them, and fortunately he never tried to do that which he could not. Stevenson might have done much, had he been a poet; but his medium was undoubtedly prose. Carlyle, too, might have given us virility, stripped our verse of its petty, and pretty, pretences; but again, poetry was not his destiny. Verse there has been in plenty; and no one who has not edited a verse-producing magazine can possibly know to what depths this poor, prostituted goddess can sink.

Let us note some of the things which have kept poetry down in Scotland. To go no further back than last century, when Scotland should have been emerging from the mists of civil strife to dignity and culture, there has been too much provincialism, too much industrialism; not only lack of cultivated taste but, what is worse, lack of the desire for it. This complacence, joined with a certain defiance, too little graciousness and too little "time to stand and stare," have had a disastrous effect. Education and culture are needed to develop the critical faculty, to achieve discipline. Just as we need to school our bodies in order properly to control them, so we must inform our minds before we can hope for the rigid discipline of thought which is necessary to the real poet. True freedom can only come with a background of order and discipline, in a mind as in a nation, and true originality, as Mr. T. S. Eliot points out in his Preface to the poems of Ezra Pound, is only development. Discipline in poetry is shown by form, and by the ruthless discarding of everything but the best in word and image and phrase. Form should be inherent in poetry. The material of beauty comes to the mind like a rough jewel that must be cleared of rubble, cut and polished, till it is left at last, a shining thing, an inevitable beauty. And just as you would not cut a perfect diamond to represent a thistle, so the more perfect the thought the simpler should be its form.

Another cramping influence in Scotland has been the religious despotism that made itself felt over so long a period. It seems a strange thing to say, but there has been too little worldliness in the mind of Scotland; too much "scunner." This religious question is a vexed one, yet there is not the slightest doubt that the pseudo-Calvinism of past ages has been a most crippling influence in the literary history of Scotland. What the iconoclasts of the Reformation did to the richness and beauty of the mediaeval churches of England, so did the bullying doctrines of Knox and Company to the character of Scotland. Scotland was taught to *fear* that which is beautiful in this world: Scotland's attention was directed, not so much to the beauty of Heaven as to ugliness and fear of hell-fire. Ugliness was accentuated; beauty was ignored, or twisted to look like something else. Scotland was taught to fear its own body, because its own body might lead it to wickedness. The human form was no longer a lovely thing, but a thing of which to be vaguely ashamed; a thing full of wiles and wickedness; a thing to be hidden away.

It is strange how a set of bullies in any walk of life can always impose their will on the gentler spirits. Knox and those who followed him were of the stuff of which dictators are made. The enthusiasm of such people for getting their own way soon leads them, and those who listen to them, to the belief that it is the only true way. There are, unfortunately, a large number of dictators, and sometimes they are found out only in the next age or ages. Fortunately Scotland has now found some of them out.

In spite of some modern tendencies poetry will always be a thing more of the senses than of the mind. After all poetry is largely inspirational, and inspiration does not come by taking thought. As Lewis Spence, perhaps the greatest living poet of Scotland, has said :

Beauty ever was designed
To thrill the heart and not the mind,
To speak to the immediate blood,
But never to the pensive mood.

And when I hear one say that thought
Has been to him by Beauty brought
I know that Beauty in his house
Has dwelt as servant, not as spouse.[1]

Beauty comes to us through the senses of the body, and we need no longer be afraid, or ashamed, of the thrill we get, nor hasten to attribute it to some obscure longing for death. We are recovering rapidly the Classic attitude to beauty and, curiously enough, this re-instatement of the body makes, not for sensuality, but merely for simplicity, naturalness, sincerity. Too much neglect of the world and the flesh in the normal human being gives, not austerity and God, but nasty inhibitions and the devil !

But let us now turn to the resources which, in Scotland, have lain so long neglected. Let us consider first of all the question of the vernacular, though this has been not so much neglected as abused, and it is most unfortunate that now, when we have at last a few poets competent to handle it, the Scottish language is fast disappearing from Scotland and, with it, the audience who could best understand its poetry. It is surprising what a number of people in Scotland, when Scottish poetry is mentioned, look down their noses and say " I am afraid I do not understand the dialect." Now this is a pity in more ways than one, for, while there is no need for Scottish poetry to have a dialect at all to be essentially Scottish, any more than there is need for Mr. Yeats to assume a brogue in order to be Irish, yet a portion of it, and a delightful and virile one, can best be expressed in the vernacular. Nor is there any need to be ashamed of intimate knowledge of this tongue, capable as it is of so many shades and colours; sombre, rich, eerie, strong, utterly tender. Fully to appreciate Heine we must know German; to understand the objective subtleties of the French poets we read French; why then should we scorn the no less expressive tongue of our fathers? There is a difficulty here, however. Really to appreciate a language we must hear it spoken, and this Scottish tongue is fast becoming a dead language. In his *ABC of Reading* (Routledge) Mr. Ezra Pound says: "The changing of language is done in three principal ways: You receive the language as your race has left it, the words have meanings that have 'grown into the race's skin' . . . And the good writer chooses his words for their 'meaning,' but that meaning is not a set cut-off thing like the move of knight or pawn on a chessboard. It comes up with roots, with associations, with how and where the word is familiarly used. . . ." Herein lies the strength and the weakness of the Scottish language. Almost nowhere to-day can we hear the words, the beautiful, resonant, pithy phrases that were in constant use even so lately as our own childhood. "The talkies" have done their worst. As instead of "Yes sir" we now hear "OK chief" or even "O K Big Boy!" so "My wee lass" or "Bairnie" have become "Kid" or "Cutie." The waspish insidious curse of Americanism is with us even unto the farthest hills. The Scots still spoken is a debased and impoverished echo of the speech of our fathers; more a corruption of English than a Scottish tongue: either deliberately coarse, or hideously refined; no longer the dignified and pleasing utterance of the past. Soon—to the next generation perhaps—to write in Scots will be like writing Greek or Latin; and it is so difficult to make a success of writing a language which we neither speak nor think. A poem should arise without volition. It should be a natural growth, not a verbal exercise. It is this fact which may seal the doom of Scottish vernacular poetry. It cannot be said that the dreadful "jingle" that has been written in Scots will help its case; the pseudo-tenderness, the awful jollity, the lolloping rhythms, though these have a certain negative value as an example of what not to do.

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[1] *The Plumes of Time* (Allen and Unwin).

But to return to the other resources which lie ready to the hand of the modern Scottish poet, there is first of all the Celtic tradition. By this I do not mean the folk-lore and legends of the Gael, rich though these may be in poetic content. I mean the cast of mind; the restraint; the instinctive choice of telling word and phrase; the richness of imagination and imagery; the worship of beauty; the fire and ice; the passion and simplicity and austerity that go to make up the Celt. Here is the stuff on which dreams, and poets, are made. The modern bard would do better to study the style of the *Book of the Dean of Lismore* and its contemporaries than almost anything between that and the present time. Renan has said "In the chorus of humanity no race equals the Celts in penetrative notes that go to the heart." There is nothing of pose about the poetry or the music of the Celt. It is sincere and lovely. (Though the pseudo-Celt is an abomination.) Celtic music has endless possibilities that have lain unheeded or misunderstood for centuries. Whereas most music ("learned music") is written only in two modes, major and minor, with set and inelastic rhythms, Celtic music has a score of modes and extraordinary variety of rhythm. Instead of phrases composed of 4 or 8 bars we get phrases of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 bars, giving elasticity and variety not to be found elsewhere. The time also makes a much freer use of measures, having a possible 5, 7 and even 9 beats in a bar. (It has, for example, a 2½/4, a 3½/4 and a 4½/4 time.) Such freedom has its analogy in the re-discovery of "sprung verse" in poetry. The musical possibilities of these things, familiar for centuries to the Celtic ear, are only beginning to be discovered by musicians outside. Musicians have been attracted by Celtic music since the seventeenth century but their ignorance of its construction led well-meaning people to "correct" the melodies into the major or minor modes (mostly minor), thus utterly destroying the character of the music. The dreadful havoc wrought in Celtic music in this way has only begun to be realized and atoned for. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished that Scottish poetry and Scottish music should emerge together gloriously into the light. The rich possibilities of freedom of rhythm together with the austerity and self-discipline inherent in the Celt, the vision and even mysticism possible to him, his capacity for deep emotion, his sense of colour and shape (as shown by some of the younger Scottish painters) should utterly revolutionize the poetry of Scotland. There is some tendency at the moment to too much search after "realism," though this applies, I think, more to Scottish novelists than to Scottish poets. Some of this "realism" is rather too aggressive, reminding us in more ways than one of a cock crowing on his own dunghill. The midden, after all, is not by any means the most important part of the farmyard, though it has its own integral function in the scheme of things. Nor has Scotland entirely escaped the urge to be political or reformatory in verse. Personally I do not consider civil strife, nor political propaganda, a fit subject for poetry. I agree with Yeats when he says "On being asked for a War Poem":

> I think it better in times like these
> A poet's mouth be silent, for in truth
> We have no gift to set a statesman right. . . .[1]

The Celt should have little temptation to be ornate—one of the chief curses of poetry. There are many simplicities. There is the simplicity that arises from poverty of thought or inspiration; an undesirable type. But there is also the simplicity of a pearl, of Greek architecture; the simplicity of true greatness, of perfection, that needs no ornament nor embellishment, but stands to all eternity, shaking the heart of man with the starkness of its beauty. There is the simplicity of mysticism, the simplicity of the sky and the stars, the simplicity of the Gothic cathedral with its forest of pillars, its winged arches, its flooding colour, its

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[1] *Later Poems* (Macmillan).

> . . . thrushes of celestial love
> Feathered out of music's pains.[1]

These are the simplicities of wealth; these are beauty, that needs no tricking out in tawdry fineries, no concealing and no advertisement. There is also the simplicity of ugliness, of stark pain and sorrow. From this, too, when it has dignity, poetry may come.

We sometimes talk of a "school" of poetry, but this seems to me in many ways a bad thing. Each man must be faithful to his own vision, must develop his own genius. A "school" seems to me suggestive of a mould. It is apt to produce one genius and a host of imitators, those persons whom I call "fleas," ever since reading Yeats' poem, "To a poet who would have me praise certain bad poets, imitators of his and mine":

> (You say, as I have often given tongue
> In praise of what another's said or sung,
> 'Twere politic to do the like by these;
> But was there ever dog that praised his fleas?)[2]

The poets of Scotland are freer from this than are their brothers in England. We have not, among us, so many young and aggressive poet-critics. This type of person reminds one strongly of the "bullies" of one's schooldays. A bully is usually a person of inferior intellect, colossal conceit and domineering personality. While we are at school they may make life hell for us but when we leave school we are usually able to assess them at their true worth. The trouble with the bullies of later life is that we can't "leave school." If a person says a thing loud enough and often enough and in a sufficiently authoritative voice he will always get a following, a backing of public opinion. So in a few well- (or not-so-well-) chosen words these persons can tear a poem, or a poet, to pieces. All of which makes it more difficult for the poet to follow undeviatingly his own particular star. But the man of genius will not be thrust aside by criticism, or abuse, or even ridicule. Rather than that he may even try a bit of bullying on his own account.

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[1] Lewis Spence, *The Plumes of Time*, (Allen and Unwin).

[2] *Later Poems* (Macmillan).

In Scotland to-day (after you have brushed off the inevitable " fleas ") you will find a number of poets of vision, each separate unto himself, " Chambered apart, each living his own dream."[1] Let us consider some of these. Rather earlier than the period under discussion, but still of modern Scotland, we have Mrs. Rachel Annand Taylor, who has a richness of imagery, a sense of colour and music and texture that can be almost lush and yet is not sentimental or ornate, but restrained and dignified. Her beautiful poem, " The Princess of Scotland " contains a verse that might almost be a message to the potential poets of Scotland—

Why do you softly, richly speak
  Rhythm so sweetly-scanned?
Poverty hath the Gaelic and Greek
  In my land.[2]

In Marion Angus we have quite a different type. This poet has real command of the Scottish tongue and she has a singing lyrical rhythm that charms, not with the facile charm that has been one of the outstanding faults of Scottish poetry, but with a genuine and instinctive melody and rhythm and feeling for words that is distinctively Scottish even when she writes in English. There can be little room for quotation in an article such as this but the series of word-pictures that she evokes in " The Fiddler " have such atmosphere and show such lyric command of the Scottish tongue that it seems a pity not to give it in full.

A fine player was he . . .
'Twas the heather at my knee,
The Lang Hill o' Fare
An' a reid rose-tree,
A bonnie dryin' green,
Wind fae aff the braes,
Liftin' and shiftin'
The clean-bleached claes.

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[1] William Souter, *The Solitary Way* (Moray Press).

[2] *The End of Fiammetta* (Richards Press, Ltd.).

Syne he played again . . .
'Twas dreep, dreep o' rain,
A bairn at the breist
An' a warm hearth-stane,
Fire o' the peat,
Scones o' barley-meal
An' the whirr, whirr, whirr,
O' a spinnin'-wheel.

Bit aye, wae's me!
The hindmaist tune he made . . .
'Twas juist a dune wife
Greetin' in her plaid,
Winds o' a' the ears,
Naked wa's atween,
The heather creep, creepin'
Ower the bonnie dryin' green.[1]

Of a more masculine, but still musical, still colourful, still Scottish type, we have Lewis Spence. His poetry is of the heart, and he has a painter's vision. Behind his poetry is a mountain of erudition and a clear and reasonable brain, but the poetry is unforced, simple and sincere, colourful and melodious. His feeling for words is perfect. It would be difficult to read Lewis Spence and not experience the authentic "shiver." As so often happens with those who write in Scots and also in English, his dialect poems have a quicker tempo, a more lyric flight, a more singing rhythm:

Sing walaway nae mair, nae mair,
  The winter moons sae fast are speeding . . .[2]

The English poems are slower of movement, more allusive, more introspective:

So the five hundred years came round again with a May moon,
And the bennu, the bird that finds new feathers in the fire,
The bird that the Greeks call phœnix, flew to the oases.
Time has ties and tethers for everything late or soon,
She draweth the chains in her hands and the doomed to her pyre,
And as cinders and shadows of cinders men remember their faces.[3]

In his "Coronation Ode" which appeared in the *Scotsman* he achieved what England was not able to achieve, a great poem worthy of a great occasion. In many ways he has more kinship with the Makars than any other Scottish poet but he has a colour and freedom and melody that were denied to them. His sonnets in Auld Scots are a triumph of that difficult tongue.

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[1] *The Turn of the Day* (Porpoise Press). [2] *The Plumes of Time.* [3] *The Plumes of Time.*

Then there is Hugh MacDiarmid.[1] I am afraid I have been avoiding him, but chiefly because it is difficult to confine him in so short a space. He is undoubtedly one of Scotland's First Poets. His original mind, his fierce enthusiasms, his defiant " nationalism," lead him often in the thorny paths of controversy, but his genius is unmistakable, if at times mistaken. While his " synthetic Scots " is unlikely to have a wide appeal, his enthusiasm for the language has undoubtedly helped to stimulate and revitalize it at a critical time. His capacity for feeling, his perception of beauty, his command of language and form could lead him, have led him at times, to great art ; but there are times when his own critical faculty seems to fail him. Someone once said of Shakespeare that if he had tried to write an epic he would have died of plethora of thought. I think some of MacDiarmid's poems die of plethora of thought ; and some of unbridled experimental enthusiasm.

Of quite another type is William Soutar, and he too is a great poet. His gaze is turned inward ; his poetry deeply introspective, poetry of the mind, profound and subtle. Experience has driven him into a wilderness of the spirit whence he has returned at times with poems, every line of which is heavy with thought.

I climbed the hill of solitude ;
I sat within the thoughted wood
Of my content : silence I took
To be my bride . . .
'Twas then I heard again, again,
A challenge from the world of men ;
And at the hearing of the cry
(Which seemed to echo from the sky)
I knew that I was all alone ;
The mirror broken ; the dove flown
And I uprisen to go down.[2]

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[1] See " A Scottish Revivalist," by Peter McCallum Smith, THE POETRY REVIEW, Vol. XXVII, No. 6.

[2] *The Solitary Way* (Moray Press).

In *Brief Words* (Moray Press) he makes excursion with more success than most into the difficult, highly concentrated art of epigram. His Scottish poems, though lighter than his English, still lean towards the things of the spirit rather than of the heart.

In Edwin Muir we have a poet more *in posse* than *in esse*. It is in criticism that this Scot finds his true medium. His poetry at times shows strange lapses, but much of it is good. Poetry to him is all thought but he is not so introspective as Soutar. "Horses[1]" is a wonderful poem with its moment of almost apocalyptic vision, but of later years he has tended towards the modern English school. He is puzzled by "space-time" and such problems—

> . . . The ghastly thin anatomy of Space-Time
> Stripped to the nerve ? . . .[2]

and his perplexity finds utterance in poetry that is often too heavily charged with thought to flow freely.

There is some disagreement nowadays about the nature and scope of poetry. I do not propose to enter into any discussion on the subject, but I think it will be agreed that whatever the definition given these Scottish writers, each of his different type, can be called real poets. They are not by any means the only real poets in Scotland ; there are plenty of others, and much of the poetry of Scotland is still unheard. But these form a representative group and their writings illustrate the new power that is moving in Scottish poetry.

Emotions are universal and there must therefore be a universal factor informing all poetry. Inspiration comes, and the poet's task is to crystallize it to art. But inspiration is not the only thing which makes a poet. There is another factor, elusive and undefinable, without which poetry is as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." We have an analogy in the voice of a singer. One singer may have a fine voice, perfectly produced, clear, true, resonant : but it may be what is known as a "white voice." Another singer may have quite a small voice, imperfectly produced, not very clear; but this little voice may hold all heart-break in its sweetness and its tenderness, may defeat its audience to tears in even the simplest song. So it is with poetry. I think that these poets here mentioned have all in some measure this indefinable something, this *sine qua non* of poetry.

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[1] (The Hogarth Press.) [2] *Variations on a Time Theme.*

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

YOU THAT ARE CONTENT

THEY come again,
Dancing round and round.
Too many come.
I cannot hold them all.
They are not shadows as you say they are,
You that are content.
I know them better, far, than you.
A flickering candle.
Cannot press my breast against a wall,
And make me fight for breath.
You that think you know, know not.
My shadows are all grim realities,
With height, and depth, and weight,
Wandering around by day, by night.
When I was a child,
Days and nights were kind.
I was content, then,
Like you who tell me lies,
Who tell me fiends are only shadows,
That will go, when light comes.
Does not light bring shadows?
You that are strong, you that are cold and hard,
You that are kind, so kind.
I weep.
Can I be a child again?
It would be easier, then, to breathe
I could go and play, then,
In the sun.

WILLIAM MARSHALL.

THE TRIUMPH OF "PURE POETRY"

THE award of the Hawthornden Prize to Miss Ruth Pitter for her book of poems, *A Trophy of Arms*, is an encouragement and a reassurance to all who, in spite of a hundred and one contrary and conflicting influences, still dare to worship "pure poetry." It would seem that at the present time poetry is fighting for its life, and poets are called upon to defend that which is logically not defensible, being obvious, for until now, poetry has been universally recognized as—among many other things, for definitions of poetry are endless—the language of reality, the speech of the true self, the only word-medium by which the incommunicable may be in a measure conveyed, and that it should treat of the eternal, not the transitory, has been considered a primary essential. But in the last twenty years a new genus has arisen, declaring the evanescent spirit of the age to be the sole worthy subject for poetry, and this the spirit of scientific and commercial progress (no doubt it is the rapidity of the progress that has swept the young aspirants off their feet and overthrown their balance), of machines, of dishonest political propaganda (this is pre-eminently an age of lies), materialism, secularism, even paganism, moral confusion, and restlessness. This genus condemns tradition, rejects with youthful arrogance the considered pronouncements of centuries, and in the name of progress violates the lovely Muse. But the true poets still go their inevitable way, "leaving the unquiet to be as unquiet as they will," and fortunately there remain some critics who weather the storm of modernism with comparative unconcern, and have no difficulty in recognizing genius when it comes their way. Hence this year's award of the Hawthornden Prize. In Miss Pitter's poetry we find no single topical reference ; like all true poetry, it is timeless.

Here is one of the "strangers and pilgrims declaring plainly that they seek a country." To quote her own lovely lines :

> Though the world burn, the spirit as a bird shall
> flee to her mountain,

and on that crystal mountain, multi-coloured under limpid skies, the spirit of this exquisite poet lives :

. . . I fly
Ever, for ever rest
Alone and with a host : in the void sky
There do I build my nest,

or in :

. . . Those hid citadels
Where in the depth of my enchanted glass
The changeless image dwells.
. . . where for ever blooms the nameless tree.

Wordsworth in his famous Immortality Ode leaves us in no doubt as to the source and destination of the soul, and in the poet of genius this awareness creates the unrest that is finally perhaps the motive-force of all great poetry. Gerard Manley Hopkins expressed it simply in the words : " Thee, God, I come from, to Thee go." The poet, like the saint, is inevitably ill-at-ease in his strange temporary abode, a homeless alien looking everywhere for the lost, dimly-remembered refuge, and finding reassurances only in flashes, suffering in love and beauty the nostalgia of the outcast for his native land. In Miss Pitter's poetry the nostalgia is scarcely to be borne ; the simplest lines ache :

I saw the tops of the tall elms shine
Over the mist on the lea,
And the new bells upon the bine
Opened most silently,

or :

Since the battle goes so ill
Let me lie down and dream of home,
To-night I'll lie upon the hill
Between the leaves and the loam,
Lie there where quiet was
Between the bough and the grass.

She writes exquisitely of Nature, in simple words born of the child-like vision that in the poet can never be dimmed. And here we come to an outstanding quality in her work, a quality found pre-eminently in Blake : the innocence of maturity, wholly different from, and clearly of far greater value than, the much-vaunted innocence of childhood. In the child there is no consciousness of evil and sin, but in the mature poet the conflict between life as desired and life as experienced has been endured and a compromise made; complete victory perhaps there can never be, but there is at last acceptance and a degree of peace. At some moment of his experience every poet is crucified by the sins of the world; there is the descent into hell, and at last the golden resurrection and the new, strong life. So we find in the poetry of Ruth Pitter, as in Blake, the limpid imagery, the child-like simplicity, allied to imagery that is sordid and ugly; the passionate love of beauty warring with a mystic hatred of ugliness, as in the poem " Time ":

> Where is my field, my wood, my morning dew?
>
> . . . . .
>
> My clouds, and where my brooks of quietness? . . .
> . . . Gone, all gone,
> Or shrunk to poverty . . .
>
> . . . . .
>
> I'll raze your dirty mansion, it needs purging,
> And wring your neck until your head comes off,
> And burn your remnant. . . . Foul and greedy Time,
> See, your hoard rots apace, and all who have
> Some true wealth, and the wisdom to preserve it,
> Fly from your precinct into Eternity—
> A city that I wish I had not left,

and again:

> I see mankind, how it is vile;
> A cruel pain!
> Sweet innocence, return awhile,
> I'll look again.
> Lost innocence its candid eye
> Opes from the east,
> From where it lay, where it doth lie,
> On my God's breast.

Always the chaste, the virginal, the clear vision triumphs; evil is the dark shadow intermittently blurring the mirror, a sombre phantom to be wrestled with and overcome in order to reach the lovely lake that is ever waiting. And Ruth Pitter never fails to reach the lake. Even in a poem of strong despair, like " Storm," where she writes of:

> All in a moment changing balefully,
> Wholesome to fell, and homeliest to strange:

A yellow awe and swift pestilence
Precipitating natural decays,

and of:

. . . the sudden storm in the mind,
Conceived of anguish brooding wastefully,
Heaping the sullen forces baulked by life,

she cannot but write also of:

. . . the tempest-following calm,
The glitter, and the charm of a chilled air,
Songs poured while draggled plumes are fanned to dry. . . .

. . . . .

While beauty new and naked opens and shines.

Often she retreats into the transparent child-world, and describes the "Stormcock in Elder":

The throbbing throat that made the cry,
The breast dewed from the misty air,
The polished bill that opened wide
And showed the pointed tongue inside,

or:

. . . the linnet
Lying with hard-wrung claw on the tender turf,
Dead, not dinting the beautiful mosses,
Green feather caressing dun feather, the petal of cranesbill,
Minute and rosy, fallen upon its bosom.

Here, indeed are the "tears that are in things," the passionate love of the child for the tiny creatures, wedded to the adult's heart-broken compassion. It is because of, not in spite of, its simplicity that this poetry is mature.

The death and resurrection rhythm is clearly shown in perhaps the greatest of her poems, *A Solemn Meditation.* This, like much of the later work especially, is difficult because profound; unless these spiritual profundities are expressed in parable or paradox the diction is inevitably involved and contradictory. Equally a poem of despair and triumph, it ends magnificently:

Then Alleluia all my gashes cry;
My woe springs up and flourishes from the tomb
In her lord's likeness terrible and fair;
Knowing her root, her blossom in the sky
She rears; now flocking to her branches come
The paradisal birds of upper air,
Which Alleluia cry, and cry again,
And death from out the grave replies Amen.

Again the imagery is reminiscent of Blake ; indeed some of the lines are so vividly pictorial that Blake's illustrations spring to the mind :

The swift fall wings the ascent : close eyes

And hurl head down and sheer
Into the black of life unfathomable ;
Down to the nethermost dive : the prize
Only to him who the night-hemisphere
Can girdle like the sun. . . .

To quote A. E. Housman : " Poetry is not the thing said, but a way of saying it " ; Miss Pitter's diction is unique, and her use of every word, every simplest phrase, burdened with significance. Sometimes, but rarely, she resorts to the customary poetic manner and gains an effect by pure alliteration :

While under the willow the waters flow,
While willow waxes and waters wane,
When wind is slumbrous and water slow,
And woodbine waves in the wandering lane,

but almost always it is the sheer weight of the thought, or the emotion, and no traditional method, that creates the magic that is poetry, a magic in her work so poignant that the reader sensitive to this enchantment must often pause for breath.

There are curiously apocalyptic poems too : esoteric references to " lions . . . amid lily and violet sleeping." the Lion who " waves in heaven his flames of hair," the " great archangel old," and the strange lines of the poem " My God Beholds me (*Hymns to the Noumenon*) " in the stanza called " The Spanish Painting " :

Yet (star within a tomb) the painter here
Bursts the strong sepulcre, and to a sound
Terrible, of all chords in heaven and earth
From the black diapason to shrill white,
Bids the dead lord in majesty arise,
Makes fly the pentecostal dove, which soars
Out of the canvas, and strikes dead in the heart
The fell phenomenon, burns it away,
Leaving Noumenon pulsing above time :
Which triumph my eternal God beholds.

It is hard to refrain from suggesting here that this kind of writing is greater than the bones and machinery, political and commercial, crippled and limping, obscure disguised as intellectual, barren or abortive verse of the moderns. This is cosmic poetry, concerned with the eternal verities, not the passing show, the boarding-house chatter, the echoes from the cinema and the radio. The moderns are incurably myopic: they see no further than the trivialities, which, quite naturally, madden them.

And love-poetry to-day, because the moderns prefer various kinds of perversion, abnormality and moral aberration, implying that love, like natural beauty, has become old-fashioned, too ordinary to be a fit subject for poetry, is said to be difficult to the point of impossibility. It is as daring to write of love as of " beauty " (so the new school would have us believe). Well, we can only feel in passing a pang of pity for those who belittle the lovely winged boy. His wings remain radiant; still he remains poised lightly, triumphantly, in the very heart of London, his bow tense; he will not be dethroned. Ruth Pitter's love-poetry is certainly infrequent, yet all her work is irradiated with, warmed with, the flame of tenderness that can only be born of human love. Perhaps the most obvious love-poem in the book is the " Untitled Poem " beginning " As when the faithful return to valleys beloved." In " The Unicorn " she writes with great delicacy and strength of the self-fulfilment of love, of the courage born of the glorious love-experience in itself, whether the love be returned or not:

Give or withhold, all's nothing, as I go
On to those glimmering grounds
Where falling secretly and quiet as snow
The silent music sounds;
Where earth is withered away before the eyes,
And heaven hangs in the air,
For in the oak the bird of paradise
Alights, and triumphs there.

. . . . .

I lay my beams from start to star, and make
My house where all is bare;
Hate, slay, withhold, I rear it for thy sake,
And thou art with me there.

This is the mystic self-fulfilment, the union that inevitably takes place through the miracle of deep love; perhaps it can best be described—though such concepts evade words—as the love-union with love itself, often far richer in its fruits than the human fulfilment, for creation from this mating is limitless. The generating experience becomes *by comparison* almost trivial, although of course no moment of life, and certainly no human experience, can ever be actually trivial to the poet. The poem "Early Rising," though beginning and ending with the invocation "O, my true love" is more a Nature than a love-poem. There is in Miss Pitter's work the impersonal, non-subjective quality of all great art: the ego, while living deeply withdrawn in solitude and silence, yet flows out continually to life, giving and gaining, relating every experience to the whole, always trying to piece together the fragments of the pattern, never content with the sensations of the "I" in themselves, but always questioning, searching for the meaning. The artist and the saint are of all men the most profoundly self-concerned, self-conscious, yet utterly selfless: self-preoccupation and concern for development being only the desire to understand how the self may best be used in service to, in the one case, art, in the other, God. (This is, of course, only an apparent distinction: to serve art truly must be to serve God.) The perplexed artist inclined to accuse himself of egoism should remember that Goethe exactly understood the meaning of his self-preoccupation, which must be carefully distinguished from ego-centricity. Again, in these profundities paradoxes abound: the selfless artist or saint may often appear selfish, while the obviously unselfish may be supreme egotists. Poetry is intensely personal, perhaps the most personal of all the arts, since it deals in words, themselves intensely personal symbols, yet unless it has the searching superpersonal quality, and conveys the realization of the significance underlying experience, it must be classed as not poetry, but verse.

Only the poet, not the verse-maker, can write thus of beautiful triumph in loss:

So I with thine image at last shall abide in silence,
as one who has well kept the outposts against the enemy,
even the Cyprian: when those who lightly possess thee
now, shall deride, shall forget, or haply shall hate thee,
mine shalt thou be in dateless eternal affection.
Quiet and clean is the house, and here I await thee;
thou by familiar groves, by the river of water,
under the snow-laden yew, the sun-gilded rose,
reverend with years, with youth immortally blooming,
silent advancest, and sittest down in my dwelling.

" At last." At last, after long suffering, the poet-lover is healed by the vision of the " timeless existence where there is no waiting, no incompletion."

We shall be saved, though winter blow so wild
That not a tree remain under the sky.

DALLAS KENMARE.

A DAUGHTER OF ISRAEL, B.C. 1100

You should have seen me in my golden time,
And in my prime!
Of song and tabret twice a queen,
Skilful in harp-play and the tambourine,
I won the ivory pear,
And Ophir's golden box for dance and mime,
Sun-sought my eyes, night-haunted was my hair,
Pale shone the moon with envy, for I was fair!

High in my heart there towered over all
The kingly Saul;
About Shalésha and Shalém
And Hebron's pastures, no man equalled him:
Leonine-strong his flesh and will,
He was to David, as a city wall,
Or stern Euphrates to a purling rill,
Or as Mount Ephraim, to a little hill.

You think he loved me? Ah! I was but dew,
Or a white ewe,
But in my shuttered heart I strove
To build for him a lucid and safe grove,
Hidden from fear and gall,
Never we spoke, and of love never knew,
But he was kingly, towering over all,
And when they shouted " David!" I shouted " Saul!"

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

FOUR-TIME IN ENGLISH VERSE: II

IN the June issue of THE POETRY REVIEW I drew attention to the lack of true Four-Time verse in English, and suggested the possibility of its development by the rising generation of poets. At the same time I ventured to give, in *The Mission of Machinery*, an illustration of the technique necessary for one type of Four-Time, and now propose to give an illustration for the other type.

Theoretically there should be four patterns of four-time verse, differentiated by the fall of the stroke on the first, second, third, or fourth syllable in the metrical foot. These patterns, in Stroke-Flick notation, are represented as 1222, 2122, 2212, 2221; or when special attention to four-time is advisable, then as 1234, 4123, 3412, 2341, where figure 1 represents a stroke, and any other figure a flick.

Of these patterns, the first and the last may be ruled out on account of insuperable difficulties in our vocabulary and accentuation. The second, 4123, is the rhythmic pattern of *The Mission of Machinery*; the third, 3412, is that of the verse given below, "In the Eerie of the Rance."

After a comparison of these two patterns, those lovers of poetry who are interested in the technique of verse will probably differentiate the first as a type suitable for the more aggressive tendencies of modern thought, from the second as a type suitable for the pacific phases of reflection. In any case the rhythms are different, and so are more suitable for some subjects than for others.

However trite the last statement seems to be, the repetition needs stressing, in view of the patent fact that our poets and versifiers often fail to observe the distinctions and differences of types of rhythm. For example, it may be said without exaggeration that almost all our English verse, let us say 90 per cent. of it, is flick-stroke—with the Iambic movement to express all sorts and conditions of experiences, from births, to weddings, and to funerals. It would seem that our poets have fallen into the trap set by the prosodists, who argue that the Iambic rhythm is good for anything and everything. But perhaps the rising generation[1] of poets will " change all that " ; in any case they have the genius capable of giving a greater technical development to our verse than it had from the time of Chaucer to the time of Coleridge, or from Coleridge to Swinburne. But they will need to study the technical problems from the scientific point of view of their art. There are at least a hundred rhythmic patterns awaiting development, as compared with the standard five already developed, two in two-time and three in three-time. One of these hundred is illustrated in the following piece, which is printed in Span Columns (without punctuation marks) in order that the pattern may be the more easily examined, and the variations from the pattern the more easily detected. The variations may be improvements or blemishes—as to which the reader will use his personal judgment.

In making a comparison with the two examples, the student of technique will note that in *The Mission of Machinery* there is a tendency for Four-Time 4123 to slip into Two-Time 2121 by giving a stroke to the fourth syllable as well as to the second ; but that in " In the Eerie of the Rance " the 3412 movement has rarely allowed a stroke to replace one of the flicks.

A beginner in Four-Time verse would do well to note the difference in type of phrase and of polysyllable necessitated by the fall of the stroke, as normally on the second syllable, or on the third ; for example :

4123	3412
machinery	inspiration
to vaporize	are transfigured
a citadel	as the nurseling
of palaces	of the artist
and frees for us	we are making

Hence it will be advisable for the beginner to fix the rhythm in his being (as a violinist might with a prelude) before he begins, and to write down his verse in span form as an exercise. Of course such technical helps as preludes and span forms should not be allowed to dominate thought or emotion; they are merely aids to expression, conscious for the beginner, but as unconscious for the expert as are those of the technique of walking, or cycling, or motoring.

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[1] As I belong to the setting generation I realize that although poets may be reasonable beings it is not reasonable for us to suppose that they are eager for post-laurel " refresher courses " in technique. The inhibitions of the " Iambic complex " are very powerful deterrents.

The technique of Spans of Thought and Feet of Verse, with their agreement and their crossdraw, has been dealt with elsewhere.[1] There are a few instances of crossdraw in "The Mission of Machinery"; but "In the Eerie of the Rance" is a good example of agreement.

In The Eerie Of The Rance

(Verse in Four-Time: 3, 4, 1, 2; in Span Columns)

Measure: 3, 4, 1, 2 / . . — . / . . — . / . . — . / . . —

We are floating	on the waters	of the swiftly	rushing Rance
In the visions	of its glory	from the annals	of Romance
Of St. Malo	in the splendour	of its Duchess	and her pride
Of the castling	of its prowess	and the prowess	it defied
With the corsairs	from the Islets	and the sailors	from the ports
With the seigneurs	in the castles	and the burghers	in the forts
We are fleeting	on the tidal	in our urgence	for a boon
With the sparkles	on the moonwake	we are making	for the moon
We are steering	for the halo	that encircles	our delight
In the dreamy	inspirations	of the vigil	of the night
'Neath the cloudy	emanations	that are wreathing	in the sky
And encircling	constellations	with the veiling	of a sigh
For the purples	of the Artist	are retoning	with the Vast
As the Spirits	of the Menhirs	are returning	from the Past
And we listen	to the swishing	of the culture	waves of Man
Undetermined	hesitations	of the tidals	of a Plan
For the rippling	generations	of the People	of the soil
That have tided	with the quickenings	of its Freedom	and its Toil
While Atlantic	in the vigour	and the fury	of its roll
Gives its riches	to the Breton	in demanding	heavy toll
Yonder beacons	with their lofty	incandescent	souvenirs
Have been flashing	through the ages	with their fightings	and their fears
As the sentries	of the passes	that will open	in the foam
For a godspeed	to the sailor	and a welcome	to his home
O'er the phantoms	of the seafolk	at their Stations	of the Cross
Ever kneeling	in devotion	at the emblems	of their loss
At the graverocks	of the vessels	that had mastered	northern waves
Till they foundered	and their conquests	are the circumstance	of graves
And as witness	of the marvel	in the stilling	of the sea
When the beaches	are transfigured	as a sunlit	Galilee
And the tansails	of the fishers	flash a rainbow	as they heave
While they gather	of the harvest	till they heliograph	the eve

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[1] See my *Elements of English Verse* (Macmillan) and issues of The Poetry Review 1936-7.

But the zephyr from the offing is coquetting with the sail
With caresses of a siren ere the coming of a gale
As we travel with the contour of the crenel of the rocks
'Neath the shrinkage of the foliage from the inroads of the docks
From the Forest of Broceliande that had nurtured Primal Man
As the nurseling of a Spirit for the Body Caravan

Oh the lapping of the waters on the forefoot of our urge
And the ripping of the rock-teeth at the billows as they surge
With a vengeance unforgiving at the pillage of their toil
When the rapine of the ocean burst in conquest o'er the soil
Ah the quaking of the lowlands as they perished in the snare
And forever sank to silence in the fathoms of despair

My Belovèd we are floating on a river of our own
On the tiding of the waters with a magic undertone
While the contours of horizons have evanished into space
And the evening and the morning in their oneness interlace
While the murmurs of the offing and the inning harmonize
With the glamour of the river and the glory of the skies
For our Being is the essence of the Living Evermore
In the timeless and the spaceless of the River without shore
With a sanctity of Presences a censering sublime
As a perfume from the secrets in the lavender of Time.

W. H. STEPHENS

THE LAST TOAST

I WOULD taste oblivion's wine,
Eager only to divine
Whether it in truth may bring
Respite from remembering.

Lift the chaplet from my hair—
Gone are hands that placed it there !
Shred the leaves and break the stem
Of this futile diadem !

Lay aside my robes of state ;
Lights are dim, the hour grows late ;
Better now that I should be
Freed from useless panoply.

Bid the single guest come in,
I am ready to begin.
Hasten this last toast of mine—
Let me drain oblivion's wine !

MARY COLES CARRINGTON.

THIS FREE-VERSE: IS IT MODERN?

FREE-VERSE is a translation of the French *vers-libre*—a term to distinguish a kind of poetry from that which is written in a more definite form. If a poet writes lines with the same number of syllables, and uses rhyme to link two lines or three, he is using a pattern to which he adheres more or less strictly all through the work. He may group his lines into stanzas and arrange the rhymes to make a pleasant echo. Then he is not writing free-verse. This is exactly the opposite of a uniform business. In so far as any principle can be deduced from poems written in this style, one might say that it excludes rhymes and favours lines of varying length. It is free in that the writer is open to make up any rhythms he likes if he feels they bring out the sense or add to his meaning.

My intention at present is not to question the value of this formlessness as poetry but to establish the claim of our earlier writers in this direction; so I shall not dwell upon the very moot point of the distinction between poetry and prose, other than by the assumption that poetry is intrinsically more emotional in its appeal. In my selections I have left the choice entirely to instinct, allowing my feeling of the piece to outweigh cold reasoning. That, I believe, is the only criterion for poetry, lyrical or otherwise. If a piece of writing does not move you with pictures or with sounds suggested, then it can be scrapped as a bit of mangled prose, no matter what the moderns might say. No amount of argument will ever convince me that I should consider certain passages of free-verse poetry if I am not struck at the first reading. The author may be quite sincere in his intentions—yet he may be as far from poetry as the person who sits on a pillar may be from saintliness.

To begin with, I do not admire any modern poet who writes free-verse because he thinks it is a fine defiant way of kicking over the traces of staid taste, considering this method original (like free-thought and free-love) therefore to be sought after and practised, and the more wild and formless his lines the better. It seems to be the stock ingredient of praise for free-verse to say that it is new. The young authors are doing something that has not been attempted before, and they are striking out in a manner a little dangerous and very exciting for that reason. Even if they happen to be unintelligible, that is all part of the fun, and the graver the faces they make, the merrier the lines dance or hobble (whichever phrase you prefer). Well, the plea of novelty may be acceptable on the score of widening the field of art, but in the case of free-verse it is rather misplaced. As usual, we have only found a new name for something that has existed for a very long time. If you glance for a moment at the leading figures in the world of painting, you will find a sort of sophisticated barbarism of colour—Brangwyn's delight in reds and tawny browns and greens—John's Romany tints—yellows and vermilions clashing with blue and violet. In sculpture too, what is Epstein's no more than a throw-back, considered in comparison with the smoothly-cut and life-like statuary of the last century? At first sight we seem to be reverting to a primitive type, almost a brutality expressed in paint and stone, yet there is a finish in the designs not found in wholly barbaric works. The artist's discords of colour may be a little startling, but there is method in his madness. He is very colour-conscious and probably knows more than you do of the initial effects of his work. This startling brusqueness is just his rough exterior. He provides plenty for you to grasp at and admire if you wait long enough, and if he is a good artist. He is so eager to get away from the sickly prettiness of the worst Victorian types that he sometimes oversteps the mark and gives you a hideous slap in the eye. And there are some who lose sight of their artistic purpose altogether in the smoke and welter of revolt. They are the idol-breakers who are so busy smashing false gods that they forget to provide a new one.

Just so in poetry. The young poets are tired of the easy rhythms and weary rhymes of a Tennyson or a Bridges, apparently so facile and fluent, and set their jaws to produce something that will make you sit up and listen—not murmur over until you are half asleep—even though you may get a headache not a heartache. There is no beauty in the grind of a maladjusted gear-change in a car; nor yet in the noise of a pneumatic drill. We are forced to take notice of these if we are anywhere near, though I doubt whether they move us to admiration however much they make us jump. That is always the danger of revolutionary movements in literature. We jump at the time, then with the reaction we jump back into the old rut. It falls to reason that the ways of originality are limited. If we find a free-verse poet to-day, he is original. When we get used to him we might find a Tennyson just as original and wonderful to-morrow. That is the nemesis of originality. So we must look to something else, rather than form (or lack of it), for our appreciation of the new poetry.

What we must look for is suitability of style to subject, and critics sometimes forget this, if they have got used to one method of presentation and condemn a different one because it is unfamiliar. It is very human to be lazy, and we grow lazier as we grow older, and we may not all be quite as young as the author. On the other hand there is the risk that he adopts the fantastic method just because it is *outré* and makes the old critic sit up. Poetry has often been produced in that way—or rather has had that effect (witness the classic cases of Keats or Wordsworth, surely tame enough in our estimation), but we may never be certain of it. It is the wrong way of going about a piece of work to have one eye on the audience to see what the effect of the outrage is. There is bound to result a serious warp in the handling—as if a cook made pancakes in the hope that they would give somebody indigestion. Some people may delight in dyspeptic nightmares (especially if it is a new kind of pancake and it is the fashion to pretend you like it, even though it is made of blotting-paper and egg-shells), but there is more likely to be a justified outcry and rejection of the proffered goods. For no matter how much they may cry for novelty of expression, artists and poets must finally rely on the acceptance of their work by the audience. There has been no poet yet who was content with reading his own poems. There lies the trouble, especially with a lazy public, looking more for relaxation than intellectual gymnastics in its reading. When we have come to read the new poetry without a guilty feeling and can enjoy it without thinking whether we should or not, then the free verse will have justified its existence. Until then let it stop being self-conscious and do something worth while.

I am not going to examine pieces of free-verse in the hope of convincing you that they are poetry. I shall be content with exploding the belief that this manner of writing is essentially twentieth century, and therefore—like small hats, cocktails, and eugenics—to be supported at all costs, just because it " belongs." I will start with the early Elizabethan age, and give you some quotations from the plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare. Critics will tell you that these plays are written in what is known as blank verse. There are five beats in the line, and you can nearly always count them by slight emphasis !

/ / / / /
If music be the food of love, play on.

That is so in most of the blank verse. There are pieces however which defy all juggling or emphasis, and you have to admit that the Bard went a little astray—as if he wrote the lines by counting the beats on his fingers ! It is a pity from the critic's point of view that Shakespeare never underwent a course in prosody. There were others like him who wrote far more poetry than all our professors rolled into one. I hold that their aberrations in the body of a respectable blank verse passage were based on feeling (or sense) rather than on inability to squeeze the words into a five-beat line. Hence arises the bit of free-verse that you come across, mostly in the highly-coloured parts where feeling is so great that it breaks over the cramping walls of metre. I defy anyone to analyse the pieces I quote into regular blank verse beats. This is from *Dr. Faustus* by Marlowe (written in 1588) :

" The Devil will come, and Faustus must be damn'd.
O, I'll leap up to my God ! who pulls me down ?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament !
One drop would save my soul—half a drop—ah my Christ !
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ ! "

It will be noticed here that the lines are far too long but better suggest the tortured thoughts of Faustus about to be claimed by Mephistophilis. There is no rhyme, and the lines cannot be compared in length. Then is it not *vers-libre*—and poetry ?

Here are two quotations from Shakespeare. The one or two words are not the ends of previous lines, but are printed separately in the text of a long speech by Hamlet. I must admit the intervening lines admit of a regular scansion, but notice the others. Hamlet is affected by the meeting with the players, and the recitation of one of them:

> "Yet I,
> A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
> Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
> And can say nothing, no, not for a king
> Upon whose property and most dear life
> A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
> Ha!
> Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
> O vengeance!"

Here is another example from *King Lear*:

> "I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause?
> Adultery?
> Thou shalt not die: die for adultery. No:
> The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
> Does lecher in my sight.
> Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
> Was kinder to his father than my daughters
> Got 'tween the lawful sheets."

The passion and the madness of the old king work themselves out by overflowing the normal rhythm. The writer knew how to use the breaks in rhythm for effect. We would not otherwise get the sense of desperation.

So I pass on to the seventeenth century and could find many examples of free rhythms in the poetry of Donne and Vaughan, but these two are mostly addicted to rhyme, and I must therefore omit them. Consider the following as a piece of free-verse:

> "But who is this? What thing of sea or land—
> Female of sex it seems—
> That so bedecked, ornate and gay,
> Comes this way sailing,
> Like a stately ship
> Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
> Of Javan or Gadix,
> With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
> Sails filled, and streamers waving,
> Courted by all the winds that hold them play."

This is one of the choruses from *Samson Agonistes*, by Milton (1667), and cannot be analysed into any regular scheme. It can be seen how aptly the short and flimsy lines convey the picture of Dalila as well as suggesting the shifty wiles and excuses of her character.

I have come to the middle of the seventeenth century, and ahead are the stiff couplets of the eighteenth. No hope of free-verse there, not even in the early poetry of Wordsworth, so I end with a quotation from Shelley. This was written about 1812 (*Queen Mab*):

> " Sudden arose
> Ianthe's soul; it stood
> All beautiful in naked purity,
> The perfect semblance of its bodily frame.
> Instinct with inexpressible beauty and space,
> Each stain of earthliness
> Had passed away, it re-assumed
> Its native dignity, and stood
> Immortal amid ruin."

In the foregoing examples I have tried to choose those which best illustrate the merits of free-verse. The effects could not otherwise have been produced. It may be said of the best free-verse that it is better than a stock metre because it allows so much to be suggested rather than actually described, and so approaches more nearly to the condition of music, where the sounds have meaning—and not merely the sense of the words. The place of one or a few words in a separate line serves to isolate that sound, and has not, I think, any visual value. This sort of verse is " instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace "—and more difficult of comprehension because of its intangible medium. I admire profoundly any writer who attempts this difficult style, especially if he succeeds—but pray do not suppose that he is doing anything essentially modern. He is only reviving and supporting a tradition of lyrical impatience that dates at least from the sixteenth century, as I have tried to show by quotation from various poets.

KEN ETHERIDGE.

FRAGMENT

I HAVE wrought you a dream.
A dream that is like a frail woman dancing,
A woman, pale and slight of body, dancing in firelight;
Swirling in a blurred cobweb storm of shreddy scarlet draperies
That float and dip, that wreathe and flirt about her as she moves,
Like blown petals of flame—
Bright streamers that veil with flying feather-tumult,
With gusty, weightless lifting and drifting and whirling,
The dark, secret, quivering heart of my dream,
Which is love. . . .
But when I brought it to you where you leaned, aloof in a mountain-quiet,
You have looked at my dream with strange, slanting eyes,
Till it has stood, suddenly, still and bare,
Naked as a swiftly drawn sword in a lighted room.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

NIGHT

O COME with me, my Love, 'tis eventide,
The dusk has deepened and the breeze has died;
The sleepy waters of the silent stream
Are silvered by the young moon's tender beam;
All charms of earth and air and sky invite—
They lure us out into the summer night—
The summer night, my Love, the summer night!

Along scarce-moving waters let us glide
In happy quiet, resting side by side,
While life looks lovelier than any dream.
From dark blue arching depths the planets gleam,
And in their courses all the stars are bright
Which diadem this night, this perfect night—
This star-crowned night, my Love, this star-crowned night!

Come, lift your face to mine. Ah! do not hide
Your eyes, your lips—I will not be denied!
This night is magic, yet it would not seem
Complete without the kiss of which I dream.
Give me your lips, my Love, my dear delight,
And in the coming day I'll think of night—
I'll think, I'll dream of night, my Love, of night!

Constance Fairbanks Piers.

FROGS IN VERMONT

IT was too urgent,
The crying of frogs.
Irresistible,
Imperative
As child's desire.

All night their wild shrilling
All day the remembrance,
Urgent, ecstatic,
All the blue day
They waited for night.

Lovely in greyness,
Third night descended
Again rose the love chant,
Lures in the lane
We saw them in thousands.

They hopped by the glow worms
Ignoring their pearl lights
Tinted with lilac
They were more beautiful
Green—black, amorphous

Oh it hurt our ears
Screams that we join them,
We had to be with them
Down by the swamp
They pulled us towards them.

Right in our footsteps
Solitary chirrupping
In loose rubber throat
Squeaked like a toy pressed
Inevitably gripped.

We had to follow
Down to the shadows
Through the closed Trilliums
Charmed by the music
Of thousands of frogs.

M. E. Mitchell.

POETS IN THE LAST FRONTIER OF TEXAS

EACH year the eyes of the poetry world are focused upon the state of Texas because of some new poet who has sprung into fame. In sharp contrast with the general opinion that it is a wild western prairie of cowboys, cacti and branding irons, there is perhaps no state in the Union as prolific in the creative arts as Texas. With its colourful background, its history dates back to about forty years after Columbus discovered America, when Cabeza de Vaca set foot on Texas soil and drank from the flowing Concho Springs near the foothills of the Davis Mountains in the Big Bend country.

The first poetry movement in Texas began in 1921, with the organization of the Poetry Society of Texas. The annual book publication prize offered by the Society encouraged and brought to light much hidden talent, some of these winners being: Grace Noll Crowell, Margaret Bell Houston, Stanley E. Babb, Glenn Ward Dresbach, Jan Isbelle Fortune, Hazel Harper Harris, Patrick Dacus Moreland, Lexie Dean Robertson and William E. Bard. Hilton Ross Greer has been its President since its beginning.

After the initial organization of the Poetry Society in Dallas, many local organizations have developed over the State—in Corpus Christi, Kingsville on the Mexican border, Houston, San Angelo and Wichita Falls. In Wichita Falls, a small western city, there is probably to be found more poetry lovers and writers with creative ability than in any one Texas city. And this city proudly claims such representative poets as Patrick Moreland, Grace Noll Crowell, Fay Yauger, Fania Kruger and others who have received national recognition.

It was while living in Wichita Falls, Patrick Moreland first began to publish some of the splendid poems contained in his first volume, *Arrow Unspent*. At that time he was serving a pastorate in that city; he is now Secretary to the Governor of Texas at Austin.

Grace Noll Crowell, now living in Dallas, had her first inspired audience as a writer of verse among neighbours and friends in this western city.

Fay Yauger, winner of a prize poem, "Planter's Charm," in the Poetry Society of America, 1933, and last year winner of Kaleidograph's book manuscript of verse prize in a national contest conducted by that magazine, is a resident of Wichita Falls. She has published a volume of verse using her prize poem as a title. Fay writes graphically of life and with sympathy for the struggling masses, as in "Thought for the Overfed":

Bread and fish and foreign wines
  Are daily fare with some;
Others dig and sweat and steal
  And grovel for a crumb.

Yet if half the world's supply
  Were heaped upon a dish
Every man could have a loaf,
  A cup of wine, a fish.

Fania Kruger, whose reprints occur in the *Literary Digest*, and whose poems are published in leading magazines in America, has received many prizes. She writes with a depth and poignancy of the suffering of the Russian Jew, and is also a Wichitan. One of Fania Kruger's recent poems, " Baruch the Shoemaker " is a good example, a part of which we quote :

" Oi, why must one dwell unloved alone
with a barren heart, as cold as stone ? "

What else shall he say, who knows naught but toiling
From dawn till dark with a gnawing breast,
Tears for his drink, and the sharp pains coiling
About his limbs. . . . At the winter's crest
He is a candle burnt to the core ;
An ancient house with a crumbling floor.
Bitter of heart, in the dark of a cellar,
Baruch, the shoemaker, a hammer in hand,
Laments his plight, a lonely dweller
In a world he cannot understand . . .

" Nu, wherefore my life ? Oi, I ask of you
Has the world no place for an old, old Jew ? "

One group of poetry lovers, the 1935 Poetry Study Club, is not only promoting its own literary achievements, but is encouraging younger poets as well through seminars thrown open to the public. Each member of this group has a list of publications to her credit and has appeared in at least one reputable anthology. The seminars have been well attended by poetry-lovers from Oklahoma and surrounding cities. Their officers are Rose Akin, Winnifred Maricle, Joy Michaux and Ruth Bransford Wilson.

Rose Akin, their eldest member, has had an unusual experience. She is a grandmother many times over and first started writing poetry five years ago. She has had over 200 poems published in reputable markets. To use her own words, Rose Akin " lives to love, and loves to live."

Being also a nature lover she often brings back from her travels with Judge Akin over Texas hills and prairies, such bits of scenery as " Indian Paint Brush."

Winnifred Maricle has been successful in marketing her poems, due largely to the fact she writes with an understanding of things about her. A native Texan, she vividly pictures " Blizzard " :

A blizzard shakes and rattles the doors ;
Its cold creeps in across the floors—

A bitter cold with a grip that clings
To marrow and bone of helpless things ;

And people warm in snug abodes
Shall hear the tramp of men on the roads ;

The cry of children underfed,
Their home a shack with the floor a bed;

The bellowing herds that huddle in vain
Against the sweep of the open plain;

The flutter of wings in frozen trees;
The wail of brutes that starve and freeze.

And pity answers the voice of doom
Heard on the wind outside the room.

Joy Michaux, the third writer of the group, is a close student of technique and the different forms of poetry. Her taste runs to the French forms. With her engineer husband she has perhaps travelled more than the average person. She could write as freely about Russia as her native state, but is very modest about her experiences. Being a nature-lover, she chooses to write of the flowers and birds of Texas and often skilfully weaves a bit of her own philosophy into her verses. The following treatment in cinquain form is typical of this writer:

"The Hill"

Alas!
That daffodils
Should spread their cloth of gold
Upon this hidden hill for none
To see.

What joy!
What ecstasy!
To find this meadow gold
Upon the hill; not hidden now,
My love.

To-day
The heat of June
Has scorched a searing blot
Upon the withered, lonely hill.
Alas!

Last year Fay Yauger conducted a course of study for this group covering such subjects as technique, style, markets and criticisms of their original work. This was open to the public and well attended.

One of the most outstanding projects sponsored by poetry lovers in the city last year was the securing of Lucia Trent and Ralph Cheney, two nationally known poets and teachers, for a three days' seminar. This movement to promote poetry in one of the most recent frontiers of Texas is commendable.

Several authentic anthologies have been compiled since organization for poetry started in Texas. These are not to be confused with the pay as you enter type. The most authoritative are Hilton R. Greer's *Voices of the Southwest*, 1923, Vaida Stewart Montgomery's *A Century with Texas Poets and Poetry*, Greer and Barne's *New Voices of the Southwest*, and another regional volume, McCarty's *Prairie Night and Yucca*, reflecting all the glamour of the last frontier of Texas in the extreme western part of the state around Amarillo, Texas. In 1930, Florence Elberta Barnes, Ph.D., published an anthology, *Texas Writers of To-day*, containing a list of about 600 poets in Texas with some of their original verse. These compilers are all Texans. Many Wichita poets are listed in one or more of these anthologies.

Charlene Underwood, is a musician as well as poet. Her poems are appearing regularly in outstanding magazines over the United States. They reveal a mind keenly sensitive and she writes with a passionate creative ability. At times she deals with the mystic, as revealed in " How Still the Night " :

How sweet the wind
Across the hill,—
How calm the night—
How still—how still !
If speech there be,
Then let a bird
Translate the hour
To lyric word.
A sound would put
The moon to flight,
The gates of night.
A sigh would jar

This is no stillness
As of death,
But potent quiet,
Living breath.
A careless laugh,—
And Fate would come
Without a word
To strike us dumb.

To William H. Van, former editor of *Torchbearer* and associate editor of the *Lantern*, Texas owes credit for the movement to establish as organized Institute of Letters in Texas. Just how many poets are included in this group the writer has not been able to find out. However, the organization has started with fifty charter members, and when this goes to press, they will have held their first meeting in Dallas, Texas, in observance of Literary Week in Texas. And then there are the junior poets of Texas. Fania Kruger's daughter, Bertha Kruger, published her first volume of verse at the age of nine years and gave it the title : *Ghosts in the Night*. Recently through the untiring efforts of Frances Coffin Boaz, Fort Worth, but formerly of Wichita Falls, a book of children's verse was compiled and fittingly bears the title of *Colts of Pegasus*. This was accomplished by Mrs. Boaz through the co-operation of the Federation of Women's Clubs and schools of the state. Of the 7,000 contributions made, 700 of them were selected for the winners. The ages of the young poets range from three years to twenty-one. Mrs. Boaz is a teacher and poet herself and delights her audiences with radio programmes over KTAT. While the little poems in *Colts of Pegasus* do not always conform to the rules of technique laid down by their elders, still they furnish imagination and originality of thought that is refreshing. For example, one little youngster of four thinks :

" A little easy wind blows in our trees . . .
And it sounds like God whispering."

Ruth Bransford Wilson,

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: LXVIII

HENRY EVELYN BLISS is a scientist turned poet. Author of the three volumed work on *The Organization of Knowledge*, which in 1929 was introduced by John Dewey as monumental, and *System of Biographic Classification*, this scientist surprises his many followers by publishing *Better Late than Never*, by Henry Evelyn Bliss (Putnam's Sons).

John Hall Wheelock, in a Foreword to Mr. Bliss, writes: " Reading the poems was a real pleasure. No poet or lover of poetry I think could read them without knowing that they were the work of one who has the heart of a true poet. . . . The scope and sincerity of the opening sonnet sequence, restraint and austerity of your verse, give proof of disciplined art."

Mr. Bliss tells us: "I distinguish poetry, the artistic product, from mere poetic expression, which may arise in speech or in prose; and again in poetic thought and feeling or emotion, there may be poetic thought or spirit without poetic expression, as in the reticent verse of Housman and in the nonchalant lines of Frost. . . . Moreover, poetry is plastic, ceramic, and tectonic, somewhat like modeling, sculpture, and architecture and again, like weaving, mosaic, and tapestry. But, its pattern should not be too recurrent nor stereotyped. In its forms and modes it should, like all arts, have its roots in traditions, but fresh growth should spring forth in thoughts, in diction, in imagery, and also in forms. It need not rime, it need not capitalize its verse-initials. If you ask me why I have written poetry, I reply that I have essayed to write poetry from artistic impulse, desire, effection. . . . Expression becomes urgent and inspiring; communion with others is an ultimate requisite of artistic development."

The sonnet sequence, which opens this collection, is very arresting. The first sonnet is entitled " The Crystal," the second " The Star," the third " The Cloud," the fourth " The Mountain," the fifth " The River," the sixth " The Tree," the seventh " The Flower," the eighth " The Bird," the ninth " Man," the tenth " Woman," the eleventh " The Child," twelfth " Art," thirteenth " The Machine," fourteenth " The Book." The trenchant and striking sonnet sequence, dealing with nature and the so-called super-natural, brings to the reader the thought of a man who, grounded in science, possesses the outlook of a poet.

We give the first, " The Crystal " (Structure):

Within this lucent stone the secret lies
  Of Nature's rule in star and flower and man.
  Could we unveil it in the rainbow's span
Of some illumined valley, where arise
The glowing clouds that robe the gleaming skies,
  We should discern wherein the world began—
  Creative forces, atoms, forms that can
Weave all the elements, all the destinies.
  Frost-foliage on the snow-encumbered pane,

Silently, imperceptibly unfolded,
As ferns and flowers at night—these tapestries
Imply morphologies ; and so are molded
The insect's glinting wing, the lion's name,
And woman's renascent womb that never dies.

The last sonnet in this distinguished sequence follows, " The Book " (Thought) :

Mind within man reveals the radiant face
Of Nature and Life's bosom warm unveils :
In crystal and in star, in cloud that sails
The skies, in hills and rivers that enlace
The lands, in trees and birds, in flowers and grace
Of childhood, in woman's love—a thousand tales
Of nature, life, and beauty we may trace ;
The mind in life falters but never fails.
Man's knowledge, thought, and purpose are in books
Embodied, his microcosm, his heritage,
That weaves from mind to mind, from age to age.
Books lead, they stir, they solace, and they show
The paths of nature's life, the past that looks
Into the future—lo ! the ways that men should go.

Earth Grace, by Christine Hamilton Watson (Henry Harrison Co.) brings to the reader a number of good sonnets. This poet writes us : " I continue to write poetry because it is the thing I love to do more than anything else ! Even though much of it is discarded later, the keen pleasure of working with words gives great satisfaction and when, at times, thought goes below the surface of words a new sense is attained and a depth of insight which comes to me through no other medium to as great an extent." Mrs. Watson ends her comments with her belief that " every sincere effort finds a place in the world, and should play its part in our life of to-day."

" Essence "—which opens this collection—follows :

The rain, that washes fragrance from the face
Of each June flower, gathers to its soul
The essences and perfumes of the whole
Sweet plunder of the air and hides that grace
Within the earth. Clean earth becomes a place
Of magic moisture—permeated dole
Of wonder ! Deep the ground has drunk the bowl
Of garnered wine from flowered interspace.

Earth holds so much of hoarded loveliness
She gives it back each June in blossomed brew,—
As generations gather love's impress
To send it forth in hearts that shall endue

The earth with love. For love is fragrance—yes,
Our love is fragrance flowering anew.

Isabelle Yeiser's first book of poems, *Moods* (Colony Press, Philadelphia, Pa.), possesses the singing quality and her lyrics seem to call for musical setting, as in the following, " Without You " :

Without you
There would be no sun,
No splendent rays ;
No warm caress when day is done,
No word of praise.

Without you
There would be no song,
No sweet refrain ;
Each day would be a day too long
To love in vain.

She writes of poetry :

> " I write poetry because I cannot seem to help myself. An idea flashes through my mind, very often brought on as the result of some tense emotion. If I jot the idea down, the poem virtually forms itself and usually sets its own tempo. Naturally the refining process requires many readings, particularly oral ones."

Perhaps this is why Miss Yeiser's poetry possesses this marked singing characteristic.

The Abundance of Life, by Margaret Alexander Wheeler (Dorrance and Co.) carries evidence of the keen appreciation of beauty, which she expresses in many of these lyrics, as in " Winter Night " which follows :

Beauty, laying your hand of snow
Over the spruce boughs, under the moon,
You have taken my heart to-night ;
Closed the wooing and sealed the vows ;
Won me with blue wine, rare and old
Poured from the crystal of ancient stars.
You were my love when I was born,
You were my love in my mother's arms.
You were my love, long, long before
Grave remembrance had come and gone.

A letter, recently received from Miss Wheeler, brings the following comment on poetry :

> " I have never before tried to say why I write. I don't believe I know, or care. Perhaps it is because I am a scientist, who cannot tell why she searches for truth either. Perhaps it is because I am eternally curious about things and people ; unsatis-

fied, but extremely happy with the veiled rewards of wondering.

> "Wanting to write is as natural as breathing but, like it, impossible of complete explanation. Who has ever, from his own experience told of his first inhaling or the last flutter of his nostrils? Having once written, satisfaction in it is only momentary. It must be done again and again—sometimes with the same handicaps of low humidity or inadequate pressure, that interfere with respiration. It is only occasionally that one really senses the depth and penetration of March-wind perfume."

The poet, ever drawn to the contemplation of death, offers many interpretations. Miss Wheeler gives us her thought in the following poem, "They Say To Me, 'You'll Meet Your Death'!":

I'll meet my death as snow in blizzard comes,
Leaping out spoke-like toward a whirling rim.
I shall meet Laughter, for I've felt him clutch
And hold my throat; that I must laugh with him.
I shall greet Sorrow, dry and sore past tears;
Silence and Worship, Thought that has no words.
My death shall come to me from everywhere
Holding all beauty I can contemplate:
The smell of sod in the hepaticas,
The touch of them, like snow upon warm hands.
My death, my own! (How could it be but mine?)
Will come to me as out of me it went
When in my birth I lost all power to know;
Humbly began again to find my way.
I shall know death, for he has been with me;
My very silhouette laid on the truth.
I should love death for his determined care;
He only keeps a firm fidelity.

A second book of poems reaches us from Gordon Le Claire during this year. In the September-October number, *Sonnets to the Stars and Other Poems* was reviewed. Le Claire is the author of *Intimate Moments* also. Now comes *Star-Haunted* (Henry Harrison Co.).

Gordon Le Claire, a Canadian poet, is receiving sincere appreciation for the vitality and idealism he expresses and in this new volume we find excellent sonnets and persuasive lyrics.

Mr. Le Claire's home is in Montreal and he writes an interesting letter, expressing his appreciation of poetry.

> "I have always regarded a poem as a kind of projection in terms of cadenced beauty of some definitely inspired and inspiring poetic mood, which elicits a genuine emotional response in the soul of the reader.
>
> "Poetry has had almost as many definitions as it has had writers. . . . We may as well attempt to define the nocturne of the nightingale or the iridescent glory of the Great White Way. . . . I do

think that poetry of universal significance must accomplish more than merely the mirroring of life as it is, more than the intimate dissection or graphic description of the multiform processes of nature. . . . It must awaken in the human heart some awareness, however slight, of the glorious destiny which mankind is capable of achieving.

"A true poet is a living channel through which flows that inspiring sublimity of vision and understanding, which I believe can well be, and is, a most potent factor in linking earthbound mortals to that Divine Source of Being and Beauty which we call God."

"Equanimity" follows, one of many well turned and well conceived sonnets:

Could we accept life's baffling mysteries
As childlike faith embraces fairy-lore,
And sing our lifesong as a troubadour
Who nonchalantly lilts his melodies,
In tune with Nature's two-toned harmonies,
We'd find more pleasure in its minor score,
More laughter in each lachrymose encore,
More colour in its lyric symphonies.
What if the laughter catches in our throats
To see the flower cut down before its prime,
The wisp of fog dissolve, the well run dry?
The perfume lingers on; fresh rain connotes
New life within the well; while there, sublime,
The sun that claimed the fog shines in the sky!

An ardent lyric follows: "When Love Has Died":

When love has died, the inner light
Which makes each mist-veiled dawn more bright
No longer glows. Each still-born day
Looms leaden on our sunless way,
And no moon silvers dark-starred night.

The bird which sang from sheer delight,
Within the heart has taken flight,
And left a jeering popinjay,
When love has died.

A ruthless frost weaves fatal blight,
Life's fragile bloom lies ashen-white,
Pulsating visions turn to clay,
We have no words with which to pray,
And God becomes a phantom sprite—
When love has died.

Caroline Lawrence Dier says of **Poetry**:

> "I think I have always written verse. My maternal grandmother did—and she was always making scrapbooks of poetry. I slashed and destroyed my father's daily paper regardless of reproof—collecting stock reports, etc.—which to my infant eyes *looked like poetry*. *The Boston Transcript* accepted and used the first poems I dared to send out when I was about fifteen. To this day I can recite—word for word—so many long poems that thrilled and stirred my heart to breaking—when I was a child. I think I could not—I mean I *used to think* I could not live without poetry—or perhaps the meagre ability to express in verse—after a fashion—some of the things that I suffered and enjoyed. The greatest agony of living seemed to be that induced by the inability or lack of opportunity to allow *to come*'."

Robert Bridges, the late Poet Laureate of England, referring to a first book of Mrs. Dier's, commented: "I have read your verse with much pleasure. I find in it an appeal that is delightful."

The short poem, which prefaces her new collection, *The Luring Flute* (Dorrance and Co.) expresses an overwhelming joy in the experience of living:

Lord—
I would ask for words, right words
For telling lovely things I see;
These I have known and used so long
Seem hardly meet to match the tune
Your whole creation
Sings to me!

"Sisterhood," though not written in the usual accepted form of the sonnet, charms the ear and the mind:

O raise no monument of stone to me,
No chaste white marble shaft that speaks of tear,
Of solitude and sunless paths where rear
The cypress, symbol of solemnity;
For I have dwelt in sky, in stars and sun—
And I have felt the tides of April run
Full and to flood, more than my heart could bear
And beat its drudgery of patient round:

It broke and spilled me, drenching all the ground
Laving the feet of beauty everywhere!
My own to feel the spring, the kiss of rain,
Caress of wind and wine of frost again;
This be my shaft, to rise, grow, bloom in these—
Remember me as sister to the trees.

Mrs. Anne Southerne Tardy expresses her fervent belief in poetry and its influence in the life of to-day in the following paragraph sent us recently:

" The world to-day has more need of poetry than ever before, because material schemes and schisms have blinded human minds and hearts to the everlasting beauty and truth which is God. Only poets, singing from the heart can reach the heart of man.

" Personally, I can no better express my own feeling than to quote Joseph Auslander who asserts: 'Poetry is the most beautiful way of remembering what it would impoverish us to forget.' "

Sun Through Window Shutters (Stephen Daye Press) is the book of one loving nature and finding an endless delight in expression of this appreciation. We give " Tryst " which is charming:

Beauty herself walks in the rain to-day,
Each drop reflecting her bright loveliness.
Her eyes are blue and shimmering green the dress
Which floats about her in sweet disarray.
She holds a fragrant, iris-hued bouquet,
And scatters flowers like a soft caress,
Buttercups, daisies and blue water-cress,
Breathing their joyous messages of May.

Beauty is out amid the spring-time rain;
Climbing among the sturdy mountain pine,
Trailing beside the river, murmuring;
She wanders through the narrow city lane,
Changing the world into a petaled shrine,
Beauty at last has kept her tryst with spring.

Mrs. Tardy is a resident of Birmingham and takes an active part in State literary and club circles. She is tied to the South by her Virginia and South Carolina ancestry, and has the honour of being the poet laureate of the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Alabama, an honour bestowed for life. Anne Tardy celebrates her belief in the perfection of our universe in " Symphonic," a lyric of two stanzas:

Futile the search for a release
From life's intense vibration,
The bars of such a masterpiece,
Grant no alleviation.

If there should be one clashing note,
One string be taut or frail,
Absent the rhythm of one throat,
The melody would fail.

Clare MacDermott's poetry has been widely published in poetry magazines and journals. We find in *There Shall Be Twilights And*

Other Poems, (Turner Co., Dallas, Texas), a number of good sonnets. "Homage," a poem of sincerity and feeling, follows:

I do not need tall candles gleaming bright,
  Or softly tinted panes that shed a glow
Of purple, orange and rich tawny light
  On those who worship in the nave below;
Or yet to bend in this dim atmosphere,
  And watch blue clouds of incense slowly rise
To curve round sculptured figures standing near,
  And waiting lilies with calm, golden eyes;
Give me some far-off spot with no one nigh;
  Some shadowed path that piney fragrance fills;
Let me drink deeply of the chaliced sky;
  Grant me for missal the eternal hills;
Or by a crystal pool where primrose trace
  Their message on the soil in pattern odd,
My soul shall find new speech—in this still place,
  Shall prayers mount swiftly upward to my God.

Miss MacDermott's short lyric "Destiny" touches a deep cord:

I am all things that must be;
  The whisper of wind in a tree;
The mist of the rain on a glass;
  A footstep that comes and shall pass;
White petals that shimmer and gleam;
  The exquisite pain of a dream;
The joy and the grief of a day;
  A finger that beckons away;
The shade that too quickly must fall;
  I am nothing—yet all.

Those of us who know the inspiration to be found in the great State of Texas—a veritable empire—are not surprised to find poets celebrating the beauty of that State.

Light of the Years, by Grace Noll Crowell (Harper and Bros.), comes to us from the recently-appointed Poet Laureate of Texas, who now resides in the City of Dallas. Mrs. Crowell has won a permanent place in the affections of the American people. She is called "a poet of the people and the problems, big and little, which they confront daily." This book of poems is Mrs. Crowell's sixth publication: *White Fire*, a volume of poetry, appeared in 1925; *Silver in the Sun*, 1928; *Miss Humpety Comes to Tea*, Poems for Children, 1929; *Flame in the Wind*, 1930; *Songs for Courage*, 1930.

The breadth and warmth of the affections of Grace Noll Crowell are indicated in the Dedication: "This book is affectionately dedicated to my fellowmen."

The poems are sincere, direct and possess lyric charm. Her sustaining faith, and happiness in that faith, is set forth in the short "Foreword" which opens this volume:

I cannot think of it save as a light:
A radiance to carry in the breast;
A beautiful and precious thing, a white
And holy silence that is rest.

A calm and sweet assurance that is peace;
A luminous, straight way that has been trod
By countless millions who have found release,
And strength and poise and power, finding God.

This poet sings of simple things in her "I Have Found Such Joy," of which we give the first stanza:

I have found such joy in simple things;
A plain clean room, a nut-brown loaf of bread,
A cup of milk, a kettle as it sings,
The shelter of a roof above my head,
And in a leaf-laced square along a floor,
Where yellow sunlight glimmers through a door.

"Prayer At The Feet of Mountains" expresses the deep feeling this writer has for mountains:

Maker of mountains—
Creator of their beauty and their might,
I lift my small and human heart to Thee,
Fill it, I pray, with something of their might,
Their steadfastness, their high serenity;
Sweep it with canyon winds, and wash it clean
With clear cold water from the eternal snow,
Let these bright torrents purge it, let all mean
Desires and passions leave it—let me go
Back to the lowlands, back to the crowded days,
Poised and sustained, and ready for my part,
Let me go back, schooled in the mountain ways,
Bearing their old vast secrets in my heart.

Bright Destiny (Turner Company, Dallas, Texas), a book of Texas verse, by Grace Noll Crowell, appears at this same time. Texas is celebrating its Centennial and Mrs. Crowell opens this Texas book of hers with "A Prayer For Texas":

Lord God of every race and every land,
In this great year of Texas' Jubilee,
We come, its people, reaching for Thy hand,
Acknowledging our constant need of Thee.
Look down upon us with approving eyes,
In all we do and say may we be wise.

Because of Thy great bounty we are blessed
Beyond all dreaming! Lord God may we see
Thy hand within the finest and the best
Flowering of a gracious century.
We bring Thee as our offerings of praise
The bright fruits of our past and present days.

Accept them, Lord, and may new beauty rise
Like smoking incense from our gathered store;
May Texas write her name against the skies
As splendidly as she has done before;
Her lone star burning—her six flags unfurled,
Her voice, a call of welcome to the world.

A vivid sonnet, with the atmosphere of Texas captured, is " Summer Nights In Texas ":

Days must be hot to make the cotton white,
And have their own peculiar yellow glare,
But when the Gulf wind booms its way at night,
There is no lovelier darkness anywhere.
I lift my face—I turn toward the South,
My hair blows loose—the wind along my path
Is like a drink to any thirsty mouth;
Is like a plunge in some soft-water bath.

I drink the wind! I bathe in it! I dive,
With outstretched arms, a swimmer in my glee!
The wind has made me gloriously alive,
Its waves toll in, and they sweep over me!
No day can be too hot, too long and bright,
If it be followed by a Texas night.

Mrs. Crowell sends us the following paragraphs on poetry:

> " I write from necessity. An intolerable ache would be in my heart if there were no release from its pent-up emotions; there would be a void in my life which would not be filled otherwise.
>
> " I write with the hope that I may be a voice for others who may have never thought of trying to write, and yet whose need may be as great as mine. And I write for the sheer joy of translating something of the beauty of the world into my own language and setting it down on paper. I believe this is why most poets write."

The valour, romance, mystery and leadership of Lawrence of Arabia, captures the imaginations of the world and Selden Rodman, in his long poem, *Lawrence the Last Crusade* (Viking Press), carries the reader over much of his gallant and heroic life. We quote from midway of this story some striking lines. It is 1918; the mind of a soldier whose body has been demobilized:

We are the slaves who now return to live,
Prepared for life by death. We fought for freedom
Without a contract. We encountered death
By chance, or by design, or at command,
And do not ask for immortality. . . .

There are no heroes. Some of us were brave
And died for it. The cowards also died,
And both were shovelled in a common grave
When one shell burst. Even as zero struck
We synchronized our souls to click of clocks
Accurate with destruction, for our lives
(Herded no less before) yet lacked the spark
Of comradeship, that sense of common quest,
War's dangerous delight.
What do we ask ?
—We forty million still reserved for death
Who watched death nightly—certainly not peace
Below the bursting shells of our own minds ;
To grind at the old wheel in the masters' kitchen,
Bolting their crumbs—what kind of peace is that ?
And who are we to thank them ? Thank the Church ?
Blessing and cursing us from opposite sides,
Blasphemous Antichrists ? Belief may come,
But we die faithless ! Let the public find
Some hero—they will find one soon enough—
Some man of mystery, crusader bold
Out of the picture books, lest any remember
What nameless numbers in this aimless war
Anonymously died. The ancient words
" Honour," " Defence," " Historic Mission," " Rights,"
" Legitimate Aspirations "—ring like slugs
Tossed on the counter of our steel souls,
And we reject them.

And again :

" Never again
Will I crusade for any doubtful end,
Implying selfish power, the gain of goods
Or any new subjection. These you seek—
Whatever your intention. If not you,
Then your successor. Some Napoleon
Storms in the wake of every Mirabeau.
Lenin brought peace : his heirs will carry guns
To blast new empires in the ancient name
Of brotherhood. I see the future bared
In all the horror of its hopes."

Mr. Rodman gives us his reaction to poetry to-day, which he believes plays a very small part in the life of to-day, but in writing this poem he had a firm belief that it could play a part. He writes further :

> " Symbolism brought poetry to a blind alley—the poet's private investigation of his own soul quite apart from humanity and in a language only he could fully understand—but its residue of poetic equipment cannot be rejected if the work that breaks a new path is to be more than cheap imitation of the past. If the audience has been permanently lost due to these factors, I, personally, will not blame the audience. And if there proves to be no audience for what I have said, I shall turn to another field in my effort to reach it—to the drama, probably. In any case my faith in poetry will not be affected. The social idealism of our times and the conflict with which healthy new forces are forced to contend can be adequately expressed in no other terms."

Miss Ridge's new volume *Dance of Fire*, a book of some 100 pages, opens with a sonnet sequence of 28 sonnets and is entitled 'Via Ignis.' From this sequence, we give the 21st as being very illuminating and the keynote to the sequence :

Extend the circle about thee and me,
Spanning abysses ; though the heart approve
Its closed horizon and the body be
Pleasured and couched in felicity
For its provendered days, be free of love
(Knowing the path between the me and thee . . .
And no way but this) for the spirit's trove.

Who loves must bind and be, with the one chain,
Linked to the dear possession : Jesus knew
This . . . and Siddartha who went forth alone,
From the sweet-smelling bed where he had lain,
Bare-footed into the bare dawn, and grew
Toward larger ends of love in loving none.

We cannot leave this book without giving you " The Unarmed," which is beautiful :

Music is in you like a rain
    of which one thinks
In a drought's agony
    while a dream weaves
Its slanting silver on the boughs above
And you think you hear amid the strumming leaves
Dawn shaking herself like a wet white dove ;

Music is in you like a wine
    of which one drinks
As some drink poison
    till the ardent stain

Has spread upon the blood that not again shall send
In several harmony through each allotted vein
Its comfort to the heart
    but in a riving flood
That ever rages and must ever spend
In burning overflow the drops that start
To life the keening fires of the brain;

Music is in you like a wind
    (in beginning no more than a breeze
Troubling wild things behind bars,
    they seeing the tops of far trees,
Till it grows to a hurricane)
Music uncovering the scars
    of you, the forever unarmed,
With neither vizor nor veil,
    standing bared to the day,
While you hover like a bird charmed
And gazing always one way.

Patience Strong, the English journalist, presents through Dutton and Co. a quaint brochure which she calls *Quiet Corner*, in which she deals with some sixty subjects. This collection is not printed in the usual poetry form but rhyming is consistent throughout. Miss Strong, who deals with many sympathetic subjects, says of poetry:

> "Poetry is word-music. It gives form and rhythm to what would otherwise be a mere sequence of sentences. The music of its measure and the balance of rhyme satisfies something within the heart of man which makes an intuitive response to the rhythmic and the melodious. Perhaps it is the recognition of our kinship with Nature; the measured flow of running water—the dip and rise of birds in flight—the symphonies of wind and rain . . . all these things stir an answering chord on the strings of our emotions, and in poetry it finds its divinest form of expression."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

REALISM

I WOULD not, if I could, pure beauty see
If I may glance its shadow on the sea
Where the spent sun dips down so silently.

I could not, if I might, barter the things
Bound to the Earth, besmirchèd underlings.—
Not for an Angel's isolating wings!

For they are mingled with the memory
Homely and earthy of a love for me,
Whilst Beauty's essence is vacuity.

H. ESCOTT.

I AND MY DEMON

I AND my demon sat before the fire,
Chewing the cud of yesterday's desire.
(I and my demon often disagreed,
Each fought the other's precedent to lead.)
" No," said my demon. " This is fallacy."
" Yes," said my self-will. " There is liberty ! "
" You cannot bear," he said, " autonomy."
" That seems to smack," I sneered, " of bigotry ! "
I was so urgent he withdrew a pace ;
I seized advantage, flaunting in his face
My independence of his vaunted skill ;
Swore I would act myself for good or ill.
I and my demon parted company,
I going *my* way, lost in fantasy.

I miss my demon now the fire is out ;
Heavy the silence since he turned about.
How can I lure him, snare him from afar ?
I see him dancing gaily on a star !

BRENDA F. SKENE.

THE INVESTITURE OF KING FAROUK

THERE were illustrious Egypts in the Past
As ancient as the Pyramids—none so old
As Father Nile, who over Desert cast
The magic of his waters, till they rolled
O'er barrenness with fertilizing sway ;
Then envious Nations came and seized the land,
And Dynasties ruled ; but all have passed away
As conquerors embalmed in desert sand.

Now once again an Egypt is reborn,
A Nation with its own Egyptian King,
That greater lustre may the world adorn,
And all the Nations friendly tribute bring
To *Modern Egypt*—the unwritten book
Whose author is the youthful King Farouk.

W. H. STEPHENS.

PSYCHOLOGICALLY SPEAKING

The Elucidation of Poets and Poetry

"POETRY cannot be really popular to-day; people are more interested in psychology," I was recently told by a journalist with enough experience to know better. Had I wanted to convince him of the obvious—that a true poet must always be the most discerning of psychologists—I could have found no more solid foundation for my argument than the three new and apparently disconnected books before me. The first, *The Voyage to Illyria* (Methuen, 7s. 6d.), is a new study of Shakespeare by Kenneth Muir and Sean O'Loughlin; startlingly new, in fact—a psycho-analysis of the gentle Shakespeare, with their conclusions drawn not from the irrepressible and enchantingly vague anecdotes of his life but from a renewed inspection of his works and the co-relation of the discoveries of Whiter, Caroline Spurgeon, Wilson Knight and various other ancient and modern Shakespearean critics to whom the authors acknowledge their indebtedness rather than their agreement. The chief value of this book is that in it the plays are "studied by comparison with each other, no longer as separate entities," and from this cumulative body of evidence (or what Keats called the comments on Shakespeare's life of allegory) they build their case, namely that "the plays may be regarded, from one important aspect, as a series of conquests over the fear of death, on successively higher levels, until in *The Tempest* he could depart in peace, having seen salvation." This "important aspect" so captivates them that they can see no other view, a characteristic liable to add depth rather than breadth to the researches of a psychologist.

Herein lies the weakness of an otherwise excellent work. To say that Shakespeare's works reflect an internal psychological conflict is true; to connect these reflections into one complete lantern lecture, brilliant; but to insist that certain recurring features are not only his personal fundamentals but almost uncontrollable complexes is to stretch possibility to the tension of absurdity. Their final answer is peculiarly satisfying—"It is not necessary to claim that he believed in a personal immortality. All we would say is that his imagination was led to invent or describe a posthumous paradise. . . . 'Righteousness and peace have met together: mercy and truth have kissed each other.' In that, ultimately, lies the justification for this new study of Shakespeare." It is an answer, however, which, like many scientific theories, has "come right" in spite of rather than because of the calculations which produced it. It is an experiment, and a valuable and happy experiment, but it is still experimental and lacks perfection of technique. Knowing that the authors wish to say something deeper, the reader is yet left with the impression that Shakespeare's life was a series of very mundane complexes. When very young he reads Ovid, becomes obsessed with the idea of new beauty regenerating from the dying and, thence, of the justification of man's reproducing his beauty. This Phoenix-complex is manifest in his early relations with Anne Hathaway, in his constant petitions to Southampton to immortalize his beauty, and finally in *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. By then, however, " Shakespeare had reached a period in his life when he believed in nothing, not even in the possibility of nobility. There is no Cordelia, no Kent. Falstaff alone is left. . . ." In this state of mind Shakespeare leaves his literary adolescence for manhood and descends into the hell from which emerge the tragedies. His descent is, of course, due to a complex, this time of betrayal and thanklessness, and of an overwhelming sex-nausea, the former arising from his split with Southampton, the latter from complicated and quite unsubstantiated events in the imagination of his analysts : " In 1598 Shakespeare was betrayed by Southampton, who possibly may have let it be understood that Shakespeare had resigned the Dark Lady for money, and this betrayal, accompanied by dreams, omens and premonitions of death, was the dynamic cause of the tragic period."

Such an explanation of Shakespeare's mentality at the time of the tragedies, although somewhat unsatisfactory in itself, does supply a coherent *motif* to all that he wrote in that period, and, after a little further reckoning, connects them from *Julius Cæsar* to *Hamlet* (" Imperious Cæsar dead, and turn'd to Clay, Might stoppe a hole, to keepe the wind away "—Hamlet in the graveyard reiterates a *motif* of the earlier play), and gives them a place in the complete sequence. He eventually emerges from the torment of this period with another complex which he retains, with modifications, until the end. It might be called a tempest-music complex. Really it concerns his attitude to death : death being terrible as a tempest yet sweet as music. He may be seen feeling his way towards this attitude in *Measure for Measure* :

> To sue to live, I find I seek to die,
> And seeking death, find life : let it come on.

And in *King Lear* :

> Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither,
> Ripeness is all.

This attitude, coming out of the inferno, is eventually cooled to Prospero's vision of life-encircling sleep : a sleep that will not come until there is no Miranda to enjoy a brave new world, for " in Shakespearean symbolism, love and immortality are inseparable." To this gentle end the critics bring their Shakespeare who, they assert earlier, " is not the gentle Shakespeare of the Edwardian biographer. It is a man tortured by his own thoughts, disgusted by his feelings, hating his fellow-men. . . ." Their achievement is great ; would they had performed it more convincingly.

Psychological interpretation of poetry, although it had not been used so wholeheartedly in explanation of Shakespeare until *The Voyage to Illyria*, has of course been an aspect of literary criticism from the beginning; but as psychological definition grows more exact, more steady and more detailed (like the improvement of images on a television screen), so it can be used more and more to express certain elements in poetry which were left formerly in a convenient haze of romance. Martin Gilkes has used the new method to fashion an instrument of great precision, *A Key to Modern English Poetry* (Blackie, 5s.). Although the book is ostensibly an introduction for the man in the street, Mr. Gilkes has rather daringly explained in terms of psychology. This actually is less audacious than it seems at first, for he takes it for granted that the reader is a man from a highly respectable street and holds the licence of at least secondary education, and his presumption enables him to illustrate his arguments with illusions from the " standard classics."

The book is short without being superficial; impartial but not insipid; reliable but not platitudinous. "I have not intended," writes the author, " more than a sketch from the doorway . . . of the beginning and subsequent development of Modern English Poetry: so that the reader may advance into the room with a broad and general idea of what he will find there." He acknowledges the new movement not only as a breakaway from the decadent Victorianism of the 'nineties, but as a revivification of poetry as desirable and as consequential as the start of the romantic movement. He justifies the violence of the break on the grounds that the Georgians tried to attain evolution without revolution and failed: " we find the Georgians struggling with their own kaleidoscopic twentieth-century and striving to translate it into terms of a tradition which had become with time as rigid and as tyrannous as Mr. Barrett of Wimpole Street." The line he traces for the development of modern poetry from Hopkins to the end of the war, while it is neat and accurate in outline, is in several places open to criticism. Even in so brief a survey as he gives there ought to be room for mention of the few but important pre-Imagist attempts to seek a new and more vital means of expression. Hopkins is not quite so unique as Mr. Gilkes would have us believe; there were other although less successful and less persevering experimenters in the later nineteenth century: Lord de Tabley's *Ode to the Sun* contains rhythm experiments which would have interested the Imagists at any rate; Emily Brontë attempted on several occasions to break away from conventional thought, diction and metre, and Milton, two centuries earlier, had in his later years written unexpectedly but undeniably free verse.

The most absorbing part of the book is contained in the chapter on T. S. Eliot and in those succeeding. Here he has caught the spirit of modern poetry in simple language, and he has achieved this through a sensible exposition of the psychological nature of the time and the individual poets, an exposition which has also enabled him to give as clear a definition of the theory of the free association of ideas as any I have yet found. Typical evidence of his style and critical acumen is given by his remarks on various modern poets: of Pound, " one of the most interesting, vivid and intriguing personalities in modern poetry." Of Sacheverell Sitwell, " you (reader) have been privileged to look over the wall and watch one of the most supple and graceful of acrobats performing marvels of ingenuity in his own private garden." Of Edith Sitwell, " Miss Sitwell writes as deliberately from a private world as does her brother; and it is a world even more private, more separated from the ordinary world of men and women than his." Of Yeats, " Vision you would grant, but courage you would hardly gather from that early poetry. Escape is a form of evasion: a man looks up to avoid looking down at the unpleasant things that lie before his feet. That needs no courage. But when you turn to the mature and later Yeats, you find both these qualities in combination." Of Auden, Spender and Day Lewis, " I do not propose to discuss them in any detail. You will find plenty of critics doing that . . . (including themselves: for they are always ready to talk about themselves)." Nevertheless, he does discuss them, with fairness and discernment, sifting the gold from the dross in their work.

The third book I would take as a commentary on the psychological aspect is Louis Macneice's new play, *Out of the Picture* (Faber, 6s.); but would hold it up as a terrible warning rather than a golden example. After his vivid and straightforward translation, or rather paraphrase, of *Agamemnon*, *Out of the Picture* is disappointing. Its more fortunate parts savour of Auden when not quite at his ease, but large tracts of it are not even interesting as examples of this type of drama, neither have they any outstanding originality over a sustained period. Lines of real worth and vitality are drowned by others that are merely exclamatory:

> And the corpses roast where they fell
> And the small blue flames will play
> Like kittens with a ball of wool . . .

is followed by:

> FIRE FIRE FIRE FIRE . . .
> Fire in Troy, fire in Babylon, fire in Nineveh, fire in London,
> FIRE FIRE FIRE FIRE

et cetera.

Struggling behind all this language of pose, like a smile trying to break through a mask, are flashes of wit, of feeling, of poetry, that give a certain character to the play. As a play, it is unusual in the usual way; the technique is questionable, the characters are more in the way of caricatures, the dialogue enigmatical; yet behind all this is a certainty of touch which can only be produced by the author being psychologically in tune with the time for which he is writing. There is little in the play which I can admire; but a great deal with which I can sympathize. He is asking everyone's question, and has the misfortune to answer it in a somewhat unsatisfying way.

Diametrically opposite to this work (and, by the way, of little interest to psychology except that of type, if there be such a thing) are Owen Hamilton's *Poems* 1930–1936 (Williams and Norgate, 2s. 6d.), several of them reprinted from his previous book of verse, *The Old Shepherd*. Here the form of the poems is the author's chief sphere of success. He has nothing startling to say, but he speaks with a quiet air of mastery which arouses interest in the most uninspiring of remarks. His experience as a writer of prose has imbued in him the habit of incorruptible logicality which is not always an asset for a poet. On occasion, however, he rises above his usual standard, especially in his "slighter" poems—which have a tight-drawn delicacy like a violin string, and with a similar note—and, outstandingly, in "Portrait":

He passed quickly in the crowded street:
Scrubby moustache, dapper and trim and neat
As when he was at school. Only the years
Had left his face scarred like some battered peak.

The gist of him was there—stout spirit that
I saw within those eyes years back—the steady glance—
Sweetness and gentleness. Only Experience,
The Winds of Time, had blown all dross away,

Leaving bare rocks of gold below—the ore
Of noble character. Oh what are lines
But tell-tale marks of suffering endured—
Flesh moulded to the measure of Man's soul?

A problem which arises when two directly opposed types of verse, such as that of Macneice and of Hamilton, are appearing in England, side by side, each justly claiming notice, is by what criterion are they to be judged by a reader not acquainted with the bulk or even the outline of England's traditional store of older poetry? There is, of course, the direct appeal to the reader's personal feelings, but this is not enough to convey to him the subtleties of modern symbolism. He has no foot-rule to measure it by. This problem is easily soluble in English-speaking countries, but if English poetry is going to continue its influence abroad, there must be some authoritative selection of great English poetry graded and annotated to make its significance intelligible to the un-English reader. One such book has now been supplied by M. D. Burnett, *An Anthology of English Poetry for Foreign Students* (Longmans, 3s. 6d.). Miss Burnett, having lectured on English poetry all over the continent, is fully aware of the importance and difficulties of such a book; her notes are excellent and she has tried not to be arbitrary. She realizes that the chief difficulties to an un-English reader are the poets' habits of treating grammar in a holiday spirit and coining words of their own. In some of our greatest poems these difficulties are insuperable except for the advanced linguist, and many poets have to be represented not by their greatest but by their most convenient work. It seems unfortunate that the foreign reader's first impression of Scott should be "Lochinvar"; of Dryden, the earlier "Song for St. Cecilia's Day," not one of his irreproachable satires; of Bridges, "Nightingales" and, on the other hand, what are they to make of Thompson's "To a Snowflake"? These are but details, however, and in the main this book, ranging from Shakespeare to Day Lewis, is a highly recommendable remedy for an almost chronic complaint.

JOHN H. ELLIOT.

THE EXPLOSIVE MR. AUDEN

Mr. W. H. Auden is a man of recognized ability, but I have never been able to enjoy his poetry, and that of his imitators, though I know that it is highly esteemed by some for whose intellectual equipment I have much respect. I have read his poem, *Spain* (Faber, 1s.), very carefully nine or ten times and still cannot attach any meaning to several passages. And at the last, as at the first reading, I find only two things that I like—the (picturesque line, "The fortress like a motionless eagle eyeing the valley," and the philosophic

"History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help nor pardon."

The poem opens with an impressionist sketch of Spain's past history, the patches being about as related as "cabbages and kings." Thus:

"Yesterday all the past. The language of size
Spreading to China along the trade-routes;
Yesterday the assessment of insurance by cards,
The divination of water: yesterday the invention
Of cartwheels and clocks."

Then, after emphasizing that Spain is passing through a bad time, Mr. Auden goes on to sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come,

"To-morrow, perhaps the future.
To-morrow the enlarging of consciousness by diet and breathing,
To-morrow the rediscovery of romantic love,
The photographing of ravens,
The exchanging of tips on breeding terriers,
The bicycle races through the suburbs."

Truly, Paradise Regained!

Perhaps best of all is the promise: "To-morrow for the young the poets exploding like bombs." How the youngsters *will* revel in the fireworks, the noise, the smoke, the smell! Though the exploded poets

"Busted, to make a Spanish holiday,"

may be less pleased. Which of the "poets of to-morrow" has Mr. Auden cast for parts in this entertainment?

Mr. W. H. Auden and Mr. Louis Macneice made a trip to Iceland last year and were lucky enough to get their expenses paid in advance by arranging with a publisher to write about their experiences. Mr. Auden hints that he fears the publisher was over-sanguine, and I am inclined to share Mr. Auden's fears. For, apart from some lively effusions by a damsel who signs herself " Hetty," but of whose presence in the party I can find no other trace, the book (*Letters from Iceland :* Faber and Faber), is very dull. The Letters are some in prose and some in verse. Mr. Auden, having on the voyage read *Don Juan* for the first time, and having been attracted by the style and metre, essays to enliven—and succeeds in enlarging—the book by writing sundry long epistles to Byron. In these Mr. Auden discourses upon his own views on politics and things in general. He has caught something of Byron's tone and style, though, incidentally, he has perpetrated the solecism of addressing to His Lordship modern Cockney rhymes (like " sagas "—" Lagers ") which were unheard in Byron's day.

The book ends with the authors' " Last Will and Testament." This consists of twenty-eight pages of doggerel in which they bequeath sundry things, many of which, such as the Albert Hall and the Isle of Wight, are hardly theirs to bequeath. Some of the legatees are eminent public persons, but most are unknown nonentities, the personal friends (or the reverse) of the authors.

Here are a few of the legacies :

> " Item, We leave a bottle of invalid port.
> To Lady Astor ; Item, the Parthenon.
> On the Calton Hill, to Basil de Sélincourt.
>
> Item, We leave the phases of the moon
> To Mr. Yeats, to rock his bardic sleep :
> And to Dr. Cyril Norwood a new spittoon."

One can imagine a bored weather-bound house-party filling in a dreary day with the concoction of this sort of stuff, but few will understand how two very clever men let it escape the waste-paper basket.

There is one real joke in the book. The publishers ask as its price —twelve shillings and sixpence ! The authors more than once indicate that spirituous liquors are not wholly repugnant to them. So I would say to them : " The price of your book is the same as that of a bottle of whisky. Frankly, which do you consider the better value ? And when once both the book and the bottle have been opened, which is more likely to be dipped into again ? "

A year or two ago I noticed an advertisement announcing a volume of poems entitled *Unheard Melodies*. The title attracted me to read on, and I learned that the poetry of the author, Lord Gorell, has been rated high by men whose names command respect, by Edmund Gosse, by J. W. Mackail, and George Gordon, both of them Oxford

Professors of Poetry, by Alfred Noyes, Lascelles Abercrombie, and the great Lord Haldane. I found that Sir Henry Hadow, who won renown in two different fields, said: "Lord Gorell stands in the best English tradition; he is English in character, in landscape, and in the particular sweetness and flexibility of his verse: above all he is animated by a passion for pure beauty."

Lord Gorell has now published (*Poems* 1904–1936: John Murray, 10s. 6d.) a complete collection of his works. His poems cover a wide range, but always he is a scrupulous craftsman, with an ear so sensitive that, for instance, only very rarely does he allow himself such rhymes as "prove—love," assonances which are conventionally accepted as true rhymes. And he has arresting ideas, such as the story of the Roman soldier, who went to visit a neighbour's child of whom he was very fond. He found the little boy in a fever, sick unto death. The soldier took from his bundle a coat, and in it he wrapped the shivering child.

"'The coat has snatched him from the dead! See how he sleeps!' the mother, marvelling said," and the soldier explains that he had just won the coat by casting lots. He had been

"Keeping watch all day
Upon three felons crucified.
This was the coat of one, a Nazarene;
A righteous man, I heard the captain say.
I know not that: I took no note—
But may the gods receive him for this coat!"

Lord Gorell, like several other notable poets of the last forty years, is not represented in that eccentric compilation, Yeats's *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, remarkable alike for what it excludes and for not a few of the things which it includes. And yet the testimonies of the eminent men named above seem to suggest that Lord Gorell may rank as a not less considerable poet than Mr. Yeats himself.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

POETRY AND LANGUAGE

Mr. Michael Roberts in his philosophical treatise, *The Modern Mind* (Faber, 8s.), begins with Duns Scotus and the Nominalists and for his authorities and examples, so far as poetry is concerned, comes no nearer our own time than Tennyson, whom he uses fairly in the development of his argument—the influence of material science on common speech and the effect of changes in the use of the English language on our attitude to religion, poetry and science itself. Mr. Roberts is profoundly scholarly and judicious, neither "popular" nor "modern." Instead, he postulates that "when the language which deals with some part of experience is neglected, we are compelled to neglect and underrate that experience, and to misinterpret older descriptions of it. The quarrels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were due not to any real conflict of religion and science, but to the fact that neither side understood any language except the prosaic, unmetaphorical language of commerce and material science. Poetry is the natural language of religion, but of all the controversialists who took part in those quarrels not one showed any sensibility to poetry, and many of the rationalists and fundamentalists of our own day suffer from the same disability." Vaughan is quoted as an example of a poet who had become deliberately unscientific, yet the subsequent history of seventeenth-century poetry shows how strongly the wish for strict logic and unambiguous meaning made itself felt until John Dennis is found pointing out in his *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* in 1704 that " Poetry is the natural language of Religion. And I have reason to believe that one of the principal Reasons that has made the modern Poetry so contemptible is that by divesting itself of Religion it is fallen from its Dignity and its original Nature and Excellence, and from the greatest Production of the Mind of Man is dwindled to an extravagant and a vain Amusement." And to quote Mr. Roberts's present-day conclusion, without following him through his examination of changing verbal concepts, " To make an end of useless verbal problems is not enough : and to do more, we need the living conception of religion that is expressed through poetry and the personal humility that makes men turn to a Church."

Edgar Lee Masters, himself an iconoclast and innovator in verse, has written a comprehensive life of *Whitman* (Scribners, 12s. 6d.), which conveys a vivid sense of the poet's greatness while analysing his psychological limitations, the sloth and intellectual immaturity of his early manhood, the vanity and self conceit of his later years. Whitman must not be judged by his limitations or by comparison with other poets. He was essentially individualistic. As Mr. Lee Masters says, " Whitman was not, like Shakespeare, everything and nothing. He was not like Keats, without an individuality and determined character. He was a definite creed and voice—and that because of his democratic passion and love of the American nation and its prospect as well as because of his complete lack of the dramatic imagination. He could feel with masses and with specimens of people in mass : he could not explore and depict a human soul. Whitman saw beings as blacksmiths hammering, carpenters planing, ferrymen running ferries, and busmen running buses. Shakespeare and Browning saw the soldier, courtier and painter in their souls as loving and suffering, aspiring and being defeated, wondering and doubting and solving nothing.

" Whitman's vision of America is big if America is big. If America fails, he fails. . . . He was a prophet, and if not a true one he must stand on his utterance as poetry. . . . It is not because Whitman is a better poet than Emerson that he may be called the father of American poetry—it is because Whitman wrote for the American tribe and the

American idea. . . . Whitman had the right idea, namely that poetry, the real written word, must come out of life, not out of books or erudition. It must come out of the earth. When it speaks for a land and celebrates a tribe it has done the greatest work that poetry can do. Without invention, as that word is understood in poetry, he relied upon realities."

A Lancashire Garland (Whittaker, Stalybridge, 7s. 6d.) is another collection of the gradely dialect verse so heartily cultivated and appreciated in the county, fostered by literary clubs and protected by an authors' association, which, by the way, might have sub-edited and punctuated more carefully the meaty preface by Major Halstead, F.S.A. Although Yorkshire and the ancient province of Northumbria led the way in early English literature with Caedmon, Beowulf, Bede, Lancashire has maintained the continuity of folk speech and literature more definitely and deliberately, having in Manchester a more active, self-centred capital than Leeds or Newcastle, and Lancashire remains more definitely Lancastrian, with a dialect literature that is very much alive, penetrating deep into the daily life of the people, maintaining their folk speech, and not becoming a dead language, discussed by a few elderly men and women. Miss Gracie Fields is an outcrop of this exuberant folk vitality, and good examples of its expressiveness are found in Mr. Halstead Whittaker's anthology.

As the *English Pronouncing Dictionary* by Daniel Jones was first issued twenty years ago and has been reprinted and revised several times, we are not called upon to do more than welcome the further enlarged 4th edition (Dent, 7s. 6d.) and commend it to the many readers seriously concerned with the maintenance and extension of a rational " received pronunciation." But we cannot understand why Mr. Jones, who explains fully and lucidly the scheme and utility of his applied phonetics, embracing fifty-four thousand words, should " take the view that people should be allowed to speak as they like," and state he has " no intention of becoming either a reformer of pronunciation or a judge who decides what pronunciations are ' good ' and what are ' bad ' ! "

Whether potentialities alone are sufficient in themselves as a foundation upon which to build posthumous fame is always a moot point. Admirers of Isaac Rosenberg's virile verse and personality, and his particular circle, will value the volume of his *Complete Works* (Chatto and Windus, 12s. 6d.), edited by Mr. Gordon Bottomley and Mr. Denys Harding, to which Mr. Siegfried Sassoon has written a friendly preface. The general public will, I fear, hardly appreciate the fragmentary and experimental nature of the poems, and the letters lose a good deal of point since there are few clues to the other side of the correspondence. That Isaac Rosenberg (who was killed in the War) possessed genius in more than one direction is proved here, but perhaps also somewhat blurred by the editors' desire to preserve every scrap of him. His last letter, from the trenches, held a sentence pointing to his foiled possibilities :

> " If I am lucky and come off undamaged, I mean to put all my innermost experiences into the ' Unicorn.' I want it to symbolize the war and all the devastating forces let loose by an ambitious and unscrupulous will. Last summer I wrote pieces for it and had the whole of it planned out, but since then I've had no chance of working on it and it may have gone quite out of my mind."

and this is one of the " pieces " :

Here was the usual road, the usual sky,
The same brown surging flanks, the well-thewed legs
Jogging between my thoughts, the long queer ears
That seemed to hear a calling from the town.
Here was Lot's Pool, bare of the shining boys
I looked for, fishing ; but it was mealtime then,
As I remembered by a hut I passed,
Then . . . I was nigh jerked from the cart
At the dead stop—like a wind it flew by—
The haughty contours of a swift white horse
And on its brows a tree, a branching tree.
My blood froze up. . . . Wait . . . listen !

Besides the volume of *Poems* edited by Bernard H. Newdigate, the Ben Jonson Tercentenary has been finely commemorated in two beautifully produced little books, also from the Shakespeare Head Press (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.). In *Songs and Lyrics* are thirty of Jonson's poems, the best known and some undeservedly less familiar. The other is the anthology of *The Phoenix and Turtle*, with " William Shakespeare John Marston George Chapman Ben Jonson and Others " as contributors. It has also a portrait of Lucy Countess of Bedford and an excellent introductory essay by Mr. Newdigate identifying her with the Phoenix. Even the cover design of these two books is charged with this significance.

NEW PAMPHLETS : This year's Warton Lecture, by Edith C. Batho, is short and somewhat restricted in comparison with, for instance, Walter de la Mare's of two years ago. *The Poet and the Past* (O.U.P., 1s. 6d.), however, makes an adequate summary of the question with which it deals, namely the correct poetic attitude to the factual and legendary in history. The paper is chiefly valuable in vindicating the much criticized *The White Doe of Rylstone* of Wordsworth and William Morris's apparently dreamy and superficial works on medieval themes. A more arresting but less dependable treatise comes from Italy in the form of *Politics and Poetry* by Professor Vallese (4s. 6d.). The subtitle, " Political influence on English Poetry," shows the nature of the book which, although couched in moderate terms, forces upon us the unpleasant recognition that a large and popular part of our poetry from *Beowulf* on is jingoistic. It is not really surprising that a poetic tradition embodying the political types of the *Canterbury Tales*, *Henry V*, Milton's and Marvell's eulogies of Cromwell, Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*, Kipling's imperialism and Auden's communism should appear blatantly partisan to an alien observer; but Professor Vallese would do well to realize that these political poems have small effect when compared with the larger and finer mass of poetry produced by what was termed in a recent issue of THE POETRY REVIEW as " the unpolitical poet." A lecture, *When Was "Shakespeare's Sonnets" Published*, delivered by Alfred Dodd to the Bacon Society contains the essence of Mr. Dodd's original but enigmatical Baconian theory. As far as can be seen after a third reading, the logic, such as it is, proceeds thus: the complete body of the Sonnets " revolves round four most unsavoury Themes " (although we do not understand why *themes* should have a capital initial) and is a " self-revealing biography " (we presume he means an autobiography) of Shakespeare who lived a life of " total depravity." BUT many of the sonnets, because they continually refer to death, " have all the distinguishing marks of old age " (marks which we, who have read the sonnets more than once, recognize as similar to those famous poems on death which Keats, Shelley, and Rupert Brooke wrote in their " old age.") Therefore (according to Mr. Dodd) Shakespeare must have written them when he was an old man; therefore, they must have been published after the generally accepted date (the 1609 quarto). Therefore, (we do not quite follow this) they could not have been written by Shakespeare. For various reasons (sic) it is evident that they must have been written by Bacon. Now Bacon as a man has a bad reputation for corruption; but (and here is the most obscure reasoning in the whole paper—so obscure in fact that Mr. Dodd gives no reasons at all) as the sonnets (on " unsavoury Themes" remember) have now been proved to be not Shakespeare's but Bacon's " self-revealing biography," Bacon must have been a GOOD man! Q.E.D. The pamphlet contains plenty more of this sort of thing—mostly in italics and capitals—for anyone with a spare sixpence and a long-suffering sense of humour. After such complexity, however, it is refreshing to turn to the simplicity of another booklet, *Below Zero* by Marjorie Clarke Jervoise (St. Catherine P ess, 6d.),—a sequence of free verse for choral speaking for those elocutionists who insist on " the light and shade being achieved by variety of tone, not of pace." It would probably appear aurally more moving than it does on the printed page.

Encouraged by better weather, the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park will be continued well into September, *The Comedy of Errors* being produced on the 6th, with Mr. Ion Swinley, who has been in splendid voice this season, in the cast.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP :

The Premium Editor's Report

Our awards for the best poems submitted to the Premium Editor this time go to Langford Budville (Worthing), Phoebe Rayner (Bolton), "Cloudrider" (Budapest), and W. R. Latham (Chingford).

The entry was not an exceptionally large one, but the standard was well maintained, as evidenced by the length of our "Highly Commended" list. Amongst those thus distinguished especial mention must be made of Kathleen Anderson and Molly Walker.

Highly Commended :

Mary Alexander, Epsom ;
F. H. Anderson, Farnham ;
Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood ;
Vera Arlett, Worthing ;
Elizabeth Barrett, Seaford ;
M. D. Cameron, Inverness ;
T. E. Casson, Pennington ;
Muriel Crighton, Chester ;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal ;
W. D. Hinde, Manchester ;
Dulcie Eden Greville, Wakefield ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Clifton ;
Irene H. Lewis, Dorking ;
M. E. Mitchell, Montreal ;
Margaret Ormiston, London ;
Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri ;
Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ;
Arthur Lynnford-Smith, London, E. ;
Molly Walker, Ripon ;
A. Doris L. Wilson, Bedford.

Commended :

Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham;
John Cannings, Melksham ;
H. M. Clutton, Ipswich ;
Alice E. Collinge, Harwood ;
Marguerite Evans, Pontypridd ;
Constance Farmar, Farnham ;
Clare Gay, London, N. ;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London, N. ;
Sarah Grace, Sudbury, Canada ;
C. M. Heaton, Berkhamsted ;
Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, Rondebosch, S. Africa ;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove ;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt Bay ;
Enid W. Mark, Purley ;
Irene H. Moody, Vancouver ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
James Picot, Brisbane ;
Modwena Sedgwick, London ;
Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate ;
Wendy Snow, Longfield, Kent ;
Margaret E. Stringer, Tipperary ;
E. M. Taylor, St. Anne's-on-Sea ;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham ;
Janet Urquhart, London, W. ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
Ethel Walter, Bradford.

As no closing date was given for the sonnet competition announced on p. 348, entries will be accepted until September 25th. They should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, (Fleming.)"

The usual premium competition is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before October 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

The wide market in America for new verse is indicated by the quarterly *Avon* which is seeking good original poetry, some serious but much humorous, from English writers. Its editor is trying to bring to light, by means of cash and book prizes, more original talent than has been hitherto apparent, and to extend its influence over the English-speaking world by making it representative of the humour of many nations. Poetry Reviewers who have contributions which they think will improve the quality of this international granary of humour may send them to the English Editor, Mr. J. H. Elliot, care of this office.

Sir Hugh Walpole decided that Mrs. Christine L. Henderson's entry was best of the lyrics submitted at the Quebec Musical Festival. The poetry section—consisting of original poems, sight-reading of sonnets, speeches, recitations—were a very minor part of the Festival—so minor indeed that never a whisper of a poet's *name* or even *existence* appeared on the programme on the Great Night after the week's judging was finished.

The weekly readings at the Royal Chapel of the Savoy will be resumed on Monday, October 4th, and the " Star Matinées " at 36 Russell Square, W.C.1, on Friday, October 8th. The rota of readers may be obtained on application to the General Secretary.

Schools that make a feature of play production and particularly those that essay poetic drama may obtain advice and assistance, direction and adjudication from The Poetry Society.

Mr. W. Frankland, of Burnley, Lancs., in renewing his membership subscription, writes : THE REVIEW continues to set before us that most excellent vision of poetry so essential to this modern age. Both in published poems and in the accepted articles we are, I think, beginning to restore those unchangeable attributes without which no lasting art can exist. In the case of poetry I refer to that absolute prefection of expression so often achieved by the old masters. It seems natural that the world upheavals and changes of the past twenty-five years should have plunged men into disquietude. No class felt this disquietude more acutely than the poets. The published verse of ten years ago often reflected such restlessness to the full. By some, at any rate, the beauty of poetry was studiously avoided, and seemed even to be regarded as akin to the sentimental. On the other hand, a rich experience had fallen to the lot of these new writers. Even now that experience is ripening, and the new age to which we are called only serves to accentuate the need and the endless quest for beauty, truth, and goodness. I am convinced that poetry is alert and prepared for all this fullness of life. A sentence so ably written in the June issue of the REVIEW states : ' The poet alone has the vision which can in time save human hearts, without which nothing is worth saving ' ! "

The HON. ELEANOUR NORTON'S *The Minor Poet Mourns* sympathetically discusses a common predicament:

Unmelodious words of mine
By what alchemy divine
Can I blend you, till I send you
Out upon the air like music?
Unmelodious words of mine.

Inspiration, having fled
To white regions overhead,
Would forsake me, and thus make me
Leaden-hearted? Ah elusive
Inspiration have you fled?

By some magic, lovely lure
Clear as water, and as pure
I'd invoke you, and provoke you
To my spirit left so lonely
By some magic, lovely lure!

But your wings in splendid flight
Soar beyond the planet's light:
O to lure them, and secure them
Ere they pass to realms supernal:
Noiseless wings in splendid flight!

MARGARET E. STRINGER, of The Rectory, Tipperary, tells poignantly how THE YOUTHFUL POET GRIEVES;

A critic took
My little early book,
And in a sudden burst
Of scornful spleen, condemned it from the first.

Yet I had been
Where lovely things are seen,
Within the shelter of an Island green;

And I was stirred
Sometimes, by sounds so sweet,
It was but meet
I wrote them as I heard.

It is a cruel thing
To break a linnet's wing,
To crush, in passing by,
A butterfly.

Foolish, to tear a shoot
Of tender growth from its tenacious root.

Might not my youthful Fancy's springlike tree
Bear blooms of summer in the years to be?

Might not the Gardener—Life,
Approach it with his careful pruning-knife?
And, after many days, new buds disclose
The longed-for, perfect rose?

BERYL HALINBOURG, of Toorak, Victoria, is satirical in *The Philistine Speaks:*

I sing of Modernists, in prose and in verse—
  Apostles of Freedom and Daring—
Who drag from their lair our reactions—and worse—
  And take them all out for an airing;

Of scribes Surréalistic, who prate of The Mind,
  And for " show-downs " all else would forsake—
Disciples of Freud who have left Art behind
  And bilious-attacks in their wake;

Of poets whose meaning you vainly pursue,
  'Till pleasure and patience desert you,
For the passport to fame is the Cult of the New,
  And obscurity's reckoned a virtue.

So if certain and short-lived repute is your aim,
  Clothe your epics in phrase enigmatic,
Or take—if you're bolder—a short-cut to fame
  By arousing censorial static.

Just a ban on a book and the battle is won—
  Whatever the jibes and dissensions—
For nothing manœuvres a place in the sun
  Like outraging artistic conventions.

ELIZABETH WILD (Berkeley, California,) offers a brief criticism on " Criticism ": In our present age of dropping from standards of every nature and purpose there has sprung up a chatty, informal, lackadaisical manner of discussing literature and its methods, which, strictly evaluated, could not pass for criticism—mostly for the reason that true criticism must, itself, *be* literature. To be sure, the stylist, like the poet, is permitted a wide range of invention; but even the stylist, exercising his peculiar vogue in the field of criticism must see to it that his distinctive prerogative does not lead him away from standards of literature which he is purporting to serve by a method named *criticism*. Even adverse criticism cannot establish a standard to replace what it would denounce, unless it represents itself in terms (both of idea and of verbiage) of even better literature ; so, the use of expletives, slang, or other forms of execration known to modern diction, will never accomplish this—and from the very nature of things.

Surely, slang has no place in criticism any more than in any other serious literature ; and untidily-swung sentences give the same offence to good taste and accuracy as in any other department of composition. In fact, the critic should never meet the necessity of apologizing for any word of his, or of excusing himself for any other technical remissness ; he assumes to function as an authority in the field of letters and, like the soldier on parade, should not permit himself any laxness in acquitting himself.

On the other hand, who has not read the review of some modern novel, by a gifted reviewer—faultless in clarity of verbiage and sequence, yet entering with fair judgment into the infolded purpose of the book—and realized that the review was a far higher grade of literature than the work reviewed ? And, after all, this situation (and relation) is the only power that can save our language and literature from decay. For, real literary criticism is not the report of casual opinion ; it is a definite survey by qualified authority, in a special field of research, the same as in any other science. And when we consider that Carlyle's *Essay on Burns* has been introduced into the average college-entrance examination, we might well ask, " Where, in all literature, could there be found a better example of the estimation of masterful poetry by masterful prose ? "

Mr. F. R. Levis aptly reminds us (" Towards Standards of Criticism ") that " When disintegration, social and cultural, has set in, the business of criticism becomes very difficult to perform." The able essayest had deplored the discontinuance of *The Calendar* for the reason that it had always offered reliable criticism and intelligent discussion of literature. In contrast to this fine tribute, there is a deplorable number of self-styled " literary helps " purporting to offer criticism for beginners —though, in reality, their chief concern seems to be to lower literary standards (among the less-responsible publishers) in order to *popularize* a less exacting market for the benefit of their clients. They talk of your " stuff " and promise to help you " get a break " in the literary world. Shades of Addison, of Johnson and the rest of the stalwart votaries of English criticism ! Should every shambling word that slips from man's lip find its way into the journal that he reads next morning—supposedly, for mental uplift and general human betterment ? Yet, are not some of our popular *columnists* responsible, in large part, for the situation ? But if the press is to be used as a *hall-rack* upon which to hang vagabond words and phrases, how is our mother-tongue to be perpetuated ?

The elements known under the general term " idiom " claim rightful recognition and never exert a letting-down influence ; the influence of the long list of modern chance (or manufactured) migratory words is an insidious lowering influence to our language and, like an impediment in speech, it tends to weaken any dictum—no matter how great its pretentions. For, the elements of a language are always laws of a universal appeal and significance ; they are not established by personal fancy or demand. Shall our literature betray its purposeful worth by crowding its pages with words and phrases that had their origin in the gratifying of personal weakness ?

Thomas Thornely, the Cambridge scholar whose poems were noticed in a recent number of THE POETRY REVIEW, and were also read by The Poetry Society, has suggested two verses for the National Anthem:

Round his imperial throne,
States to full stature grown
Stand in a ring;
Free as their native air,
One in the hopes they share,
All join in Britain's prayer—
God save the King.

Long may he wear the crown,
And to its old renown
Fresh glory bring ;
Serving all noble ends,
Turning past foes to friends,
Till from all hearts ascends—
God save the King.

It will be remembered that THE POETRY SOCIETY two or three years ago offered a prize for a revised version of the National Anthem. Mr. Thornely, although he had been for many years a member of THE POETRY SOCIETY, was not at that time a member of the Society, although he has since rejoined. Accordingly he had not entered for this competition. It will be remembered it was not found possible to chose any of the many hundreds of poems which were sent in. Perhaps readers of The Poetry Society might care to give their opinions of Mr. Thornely's suggested verses. It will be seen that Mr. Thornely makes the National Anthem much more representative of the Empire by bringing in the Dominions. It is understood that Mr. Thornely's amendment has been received with favour in high quarters.

A " Tea and Talk Meeting " of The Poets' Fellowship will be held at 36 Russell Square, on Saturday, October 16th. Miss Edith Sitwell has accepted an invitation to be the guest of the group. Tickets (1s. 5d. or two for 2s. 6d.) must be applied for in advance.

THE POETRY SOCIETY IN ITALY

To fully describe and record The Poetry Society's Italian pilgrimage would require a special supplement. It was crowded with agreeable incidents and hospitality which made the experiment an international event of considerable significance and influence and was regarded as the precursor of renewed amity and co-operation. We have space for only a brief summary of the itinerary. The sympathetic official approval of the long cherished project of a Keats-Shelley memorial meeting in Rome was made effective and translated into action by H.E. Senator Romeo Gallenga Stuart who, with Dr. Franchini, met the party on behalf of the Government on arrival in Rome and warmly welcomed the group representating The Poetry Society and the Byron Society. Thereafter the arrangements developed smoothly, happily and according to plan, with at least one " extra." We found at our headquarters in Rome, the Hotel Continental, where for practical reasons we were most welcome and honoured guests, the forerunners of revived " tourisme," we found an invitation to a reception at the British Embassy from Sir Eric Drummond (now the Earl of Perth) and Lady Drummond, whose cordial welcome to his " nationals" was a timely and distinctive and heartily appreciated introduction to a crowded programme.

Our own official business included the placing of a wreath on the grave of Keats. Lord Rennell of Rodd, who discharged this duty, gave a resumé of the steps taken to preserve the cemetery from destruction, efforts promoted, continued and brought to a successful issue by this distinguished " friend of Italy." Mr. Edward Vandermere Fleming, C.B., on behalf of the Council of The Poetry Society, acknowledged the eminent services rendered to English literature and the memory of Keats by Lord Rennell, and concluded by pointing out that here, in this City of Rome two thousand years ago the great Roman poet Horatius Flaccus boasted—and time has justified the boast—Exegi monumentum aere perennius ("I have wrought a memorial more enduring than bronze"). We pilgrims stand here today before the grave of one of our own great poets, and we read the melancholy, despairing inscription on his tomb-stone. " Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Time has refuted that sad saying, for the water is the Water of Life. Truly of Keats did another great English poet write, a poet who also sleeps here,

" The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

At the subsequent meeting at Keats' House on the 116th anniversary of the death of Keats, Lord Rennell who presided recounted the story of its preservation and maintenance and acknowledged the help given by devoted Americans, who were represented in the party, which included the widow of his very old friend and colleague in the service of Keats, Nelson Gaye.

Mr. Alfred Noyes, in a most eloquent and appropriate address, recognized that there were special reasons for The Poetry Society being gathered in that house. It had steadfastly stood for the ideals of poetry, for Keats and what he dearly loved and represented, for music and thought in poetry and for the great traditions.

Lord and Lady Rennell entertained the company to tea, and in the evening the party attended as guests the first night of *L'Arlesiana* at the Royal Opera.

Other social events of a very full week included a visit to l'Academia d'Italia, with a reception (in the absence of the President, H. E. Senator Marconi) by H.E. Senator Formichi, vice-president, who was particularly delighted to meet Mr. Noyes, whose poems he had translated and is introducing to Italian schools and colleges.

Senator Stuart presided at an official banquet at the Hotel Ambassadors, which was attended by many representative Italian men of letters and affairs, including several English-speaking statesmen and admirals. The Chairman most felicitously welcomed the latest " pilgrims " and very happily traced the interchange of poets and poetry and the influence of the poetical alliance they were celebrating. He quoted the 4th canto of *Childe Harold* as an epitome of Rome and the Romans of all times. Lord Rennell and Mr. Alfred Noyes, in reply, continued the story of poetical interchanges and the admiration for Italy expressed by a succession of English poets, who from Chaucer downwards had shown themselves to be the best ambassadors—a claim that was aptly recognized to include Lord Rennell. Other contributors to the literary *entente cordiale* included H.E. Senator Formichi and H.E. Baron Bonomi, Minister of Propaganda, etc.,—a distinguished gesture of welcome and hospitality.

Following the placing of a wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the foot of the magnificent Victor Emmanuel memorial, the party was received in the Capitol by the Governor of Rome, Vergil, Horace and Byron were again drawn on to illuminate the occasion, and admiration expressed at the remarkable reconstruction of Imperial Rome to be seen from the Capitol.

The final and most notable reception was at the Palazzo Venezia, by Il Duce. *Il Giornale d'Italie* reported :

" Lord Rennell of Rodd ha ringraziato il Duce per l'onore concesso con il ricevimento accordato ai partecipanti durante il pellegrinaggio nel Paese che ispirò tanti dei più grandi poeti inglesi.

" La cordiale accoglienza che essi hanno ricevuto nella luminosa Città che unisce un cosi grandioso passato con un presente cosi glorioso, ha costantemente richiamato alla loro mente le parole del giovane poeta che morì un secolo fa a Roma, John Keats : ' La beliezza è verità, la verità è bellezza, ció è quanto si sa in questa terra è quanto si deve sapere.'

" S. E. Vandermere Fleming nel definire l'Italia la terra ereditaria della poesia e nel ricordare che essa può vantare la grandezza della sua poesia antica, di quella medioevale e di quella moderna, ha affermato che il mondo del sapere ha un grande debito di riconoscenza verso il Duce, che segue le orme del grande Augusto, della cui nascita ricorre quest'anno il bimillenario. S. E. Fleming ha concluso salutando il Duce con le solenni parole di Virgilio : ' Tu ne cede malis sed contra audentior ito.'

" *Il Duce, rispondendo in lingua inglese, ha ringraziato per le parole rivoltegli, dicendosi lieto di salutare in Roma i rappresentanti della lunga e nobile tradizione che attraverso i secoli ha mantenuto i legami fra la civilta italiana e quella britannica. Ha ricordato che fin dal* 1373, *agli albori della poesia inglese, Geoffrey Chaucer venne in Italia come primo Ambasciatore britannico e che da allora non vi fu mai poeta inglese che non fosse venuto in Italia come ad uno fonte di ispirazione, lunga schiera di pellegrini la cui memoria è profondamente impressa nel cuore degli Italiani.*

" *Byron, Shelley e Keats sono tre nomi cari ad ogni italiano come i nomi dei tre grandi genî dell'Europe del secolo XIX che per primi intravvidero il risorgere della nostra civiltà e della nostra grandezza.*

" *Il Duce ha concluso che specie nei tempi moderni la poesia e necessaria alla vita dei popoli.*

" Le parole del Duce, ascoltate con la più viva attenzione, sono state accolte alla fine da calorosi applausi."

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Noyes and several Roman friends attended a dinner at the Hotel Continental in celebration of the twenty-sixth birthday of The Poetry Society. Delightful speeches were made by Mr. Noyes, the Rev. D. R. Fotheringham, Secretary of The Byron Society, and others. Miss Delphine Petters, this year's Lady Margaret Gold Medallist, spoke most effectively and appropriately Browning's *De Gustibus*, and Prof. Franchini, the pilgrim's faithful, assiduous cicerone from the moment of arrival to that of departure for Venice—spirited, good-humoured, resourceful, guide, commentator and friend—was elected as honorary member of The Poetry Society and presented with an edition of Byron by the Byron Society. The lesser events of a crowded week, visits to Frascati and Tivoli and Ostria, and individual impressions cannot be described here.

At Venice the pilgrims were officially received by S.E. Il Capo del Governo and S.E. Il Governatore and Count de Bellegarde, and subsequently, in the official charge of Dr. Marcello Zanetti, were conducted over the Doge's Palace and other historic buildings, special visits being made to the well-preserved and treasure-stored house of Byron on the Grand Canal and to his retreat on the island of San Lazzaro, where a morning was spent with the Armenian fathers who still cherish recollections of the poet's remorseful stay with the brotherhood. Again a very full programme, admirably and attentively carried out, acknowledgment of which must be left to the official message transmitted to the authorities on leaving Venice :

" Members of The Poetry Society on pilgrimage to the graves of the immortal English poets, Keats and Shelley, on their way home, have stayed for a few delightful days in the lovely legendary city of Venice, drawn there primarily by its intimate association with Byron. Those of us who have sought Italy for the first time have been overwhelmed by the beauty of Italian scenery and of the buildings and works of art which have impressed and inspired Western culture. Apart from that we have, one and all, been impressed by the thoughtful care taken by the Italian authorities to make our visit a success and by the generous hospitality extended to us.

"But one remembrance transcends all others. Amid all his immense burdens of state, Il Duce somehow found time to receive us. Perhaps his manifest love of poetry helped him to perform this miracle.

"We came to Italy as pilgrims: we return to England as missionaries; and we trust that the example we have set of paying homage to our own cherished shrines in Italy will be followed by many thousands of our people in their own time and convenience, equally proud and eager to develop cultural relations on the safe foundations of poetry and art.

"As a last word, we ambassadors of travel based on poetic associations are proud of, and immensely gratified by the warm welcome and high courtesy accorded to us in Rome and Venice."

To this inadequate expression may be added a concentrated summary in verse by one of the pilgrims:

Their heart within her heart, they lie in Rome.
Because of them; because of this, we sought her;
She gave to them a sanctuary, a home—
Whose song was drowned, whose name was writ in water.

But song has risen immortal from the sea,
And echoes where the walls of Rome surround us;
Water is strong as life—at Tivoli
Its silver cypresses rise all around us.

Venice has built a beauty all her own,
Riding at anchor so that man can board her;
Her lovely maze of waterways and stone
Once netted Byron's heart when he explored her.

In all this sunny land where olives grow,
With friendliness our hands were gripped and shaken:
As olive boughs upon San Lazarro
Were freely proffered and as gladly taken.

Apropos the reference to Il Duce's concern for poetry, the *Evening Standard*, which with other leading London papers followed the pilgrimage with lively interest, and published a photograph of Lord Rennell laying the wreath on the grave of Keats, reminds us that "Signor Mussolini began what has been a serious study of our language and literature with Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*. These were recommended to him by his first English teacher, possibly from motives of flattery. But the Duce, with his literary flair, soon gave them up. Then he concentrated on the romantic poets, who also had the advantage of being Italianissimi. His mentor in his English studies was the late Count Cippico. The Count could advise Signor Mussolini with a double prestige. He was a poet himself and was at one time Professor of Italian in London University. Another English poet who loved liberty not less than Byron and Shelley and had also first-hand knowledge of Italy is a frequent subject of the Duce's English reading. This poet is Milton."

A final word: we have been asked to make an annual event of this Keats-Shelley-Byron visit to Rome; we may not be able to repeat it so effectively; the moment was particularly opportune, the authorities were more than sympathetic; the resumption of cordial relations was warmly received, and we had the exceptional advantage of the leadership of Lord Rennell. But we would like to hear from possible participants, and also from those able to take part in an alternative Dante-Browning "pilgrimage" to Florence and Venice at the end of December, that is, during the Christmas holidays, for which official arrangements are now being made.

A NATIONAL EPIC

To the Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW

There does not exist in this country, or in any other so far as I am aware, a record in poetry of the more romantic events in the history of the nation. I therefore venture to ask whether it is not possible to initiate now a national epic which would recount in verse the noblest of the many remarkable deeds of England's past? Compiled little by little in the manner I will suggest, such a record, I feel, would become in time a great national asset. There is much in British history which is worthy of being suitably recorded in poetry, and I think it possible that some enterprising society or firm of publishers might be prepared to undertake the collation of poems which would doubtless be forthcoming for the purpose of laying the foundation of a work of this description if encouragement were afforded. The epic, of course, would be unending and would be added to as long as England lasts.

The task for the moment would consist of collecting contributions from poets and of placing these in chronological order, according to the date of the incident depicted, to await the publication of a preliminary volume whenever the moment may be considered propitious. Existing poems would naturally find a place in this production, provided that there are no difficulties of copyright in the way. As it would undoubtedly be an honour to have one's work included in a national epic, it is unlikely that consent to include any masterpiece would often be withheld. As and when better verses on a subject already dealt with become available, they would be expected eventually to take pride of place, but in the meantime the rivals might stand side by side. Decisions in regard to comparative merit should not be given in haste and could be left to posterity. The present is hardly the age to pass judgment on what is and what is not lasting poetry. Opinions are too divided.

Each contribution might deal with some period or romantic episode in British history and it would be advisable for contributors first to ascertain from the organizing secretary, or whoever may be appointed for the purpose, whether, as far as it is possible to say, the period or episode it is intended to illustrate is being dealt with by others. One thing is essential and that is that contributions should be limited in regard to length, lest the whole become unwieldy and defeat its own object. It is conceivable, for instance, that the siege of Mafeking might otherwise be accorded a length comparable to that which has been accorded to the siege of Troy. Familiar or famous poets, however, might be exceptionally treated. On the other hand, there need be no limit to the number of different episodes immortalized by one contributor. Each would constitute a tiny fraction of an endless epic.

The scheme is quite simple and the fact that there would be a number of collaborators, and consequently a variety in metre and style, would be to the advantage of the work as a whole and save it from monotony. What is needed is vision. One must think of it in terms of the distant future, as poets unborn would in time add their quota. The publication of a preliminary volume would serve to encourage contributors. Supplementary volumes could follow as desired and the events placed in their chronological order as the opportunity offers. The value of the work would increase with age and each succeeding generation might be expected to admire its growth and do its utmost to keep it up to date.

Something of the kind was achieved in part by the Lusiads of Camoens, which, even after a lapse of over three centuries, still stimulate a nation with pride in its glorious heroes and former grandeur.

Is it not possible to initiate such a work? The moment is opportune. It would mark a revival of interest in poetry and its inception would be a worthy and enduring monument to this coronation year.

London, N.W.6. R. RAY.

We are pleased to note that our contributor, Monsieur Felix Rose, of London, who is an official French and English lecturer of the Institut Français du Royaume-Uni on the Paris Exhibition, as well as the author of the first bilingual (English-French) anthology of English lyrical poetry from Shakespeare to Masefield, is due to give a half-hour broadcast on "Les grands Lyriques anglais," with recitations of his own poetical translations from the English masters, at Radio-Bruxelles on Wednesday, September 22nd, at 6 p.m.

CRITICISM

OF all the arts criticism produces the most obvious failures. This is shown when one thinks of the number of eminent writers of the past whose verdicts time has upset. Samuel Johnson was a notable instance; Samuel Butler was another; but if one attempted the count one would find them innumerable. In every day there are critics who are anything but fools and who often, in other directions, are among the wisest; but the whole body of criticism is as much a fool as the whole body of the public. Time's court of appeal is continually proving that. It may not be too much to say, then, as Housman said, that "literary critics are less common than returns of Halley's comet." If this is an exaggeration it is not a gross one. One may doubt if it is an exaggeration. The power to criticize justly must be the rarest of human faculties. Yet how light-heartedly some of us essay it.

For all that, one must not discourage criticism. False criticism is in the end harmless, like everything else that is false; it stands its hour and dies, leaving no trace behind it, unless it be an awful example. And even inadequate criticism is better than none, for the fear of it puts some check on the inadequate writer. A world where no one was subject to criticism would be a world of moral anarchy; comparable to a society without judges. Nature is lavish of production and destroys her failures wholesale, to let the tiny minority live and succeed. We never go far wrong when we follow Nature, so we may encourage criticism without apprehension. The judge is judged and the would-be killer killed. From the worst criticism the artist may learn; he may learn a great deal about his fellows, their minds and their motives; and if he learns nothing besides he learns the value of patient endurance.

Examining the critic and his works, pride and prejudice appear to be his two stumbling-blocks. He is apt to forget that in the realm of art one may be right in an almost infinite number of ways; that it is therefore unnecessary to assail one school in order to support another, to damn Smith in order to save Brown. The other fellow need not be wrong for you to be right. And this, to the critic in doubt, should be a cheering realization. You don't like Smith's work ; it seems somehow altogether wrong to you : very well, but one man's truth is another man's falsehood. There is no absolute truth ; at least none which the human mind has discovered ; if there had been there would have been an end of human controversy. It is not for want of intelligence that we for ever disagree ; it is because of the natural diversity of our intelligence. The universal mind may be one and indivisible, but the human mind is diverse as the individual is.

For critic and artist this is a comforting reflection, since it implies that neither of them need be wrong, if he has followed the light that is in him ; but it must make the critic very careful. Where he disapproves he must hesitate to condemn. If, after due consideration, he finds that he still disapproves but is doubtful if his view covers the subject, it is open to him to take one of two courses. He can withhold his judgment (which is really nothing more than his opinion, of course), or he can try to approach his subject from its author's point of view, and from that point of view judge it. If he succeeds in doing that he has succeeded as a critic, for he has conquered his prejudice and ignored his own point of view, which here is inapplicable, because the other man's truth is not his truth. The less tied a critic is to any one point of view, the better critic he is, if he has the necessary natural intelligence and intellectual equipment.

To put it in another way, before we criticize anything we should be sure we understand it. Pride is the stumbling-block here, for we hate to think that we cannot understand a thing. The more pride we have in our intelligence the more this hurts us. The baser of us would rather misunderstand a thing than confess that it is beyond our grasp, and many of the awful examples of false judgment which literary history records are traceable to this combination of pride and baseness. Some nobody has dared to write something which we cannot comprehend, or which differs from our idea of what it ought to be. All right, we will put him in the pillory. But it is ourselves whom the just judge, Time, sends to the pillory, there to stand as a butt for the passing generations—that is, if Time takes notice of us at all, which in most cases, fortunately, he does not.

Anything new or unfamiliar should be approached less with confidence than with diffidence. New art is often puzzling even to despair (I speak of art which is art, not of bogus art, which is fairly easy to detect by a certain brazenness) ; it is because our minds or our ears or our eyes are untrained to it.

To have no personal prejudices is to be inhuman ; the great critic will have fewer than most of us have (just as the great judge will be comparatively unprejudiced), but it is the power to ignore them that makes him great. For a certain kind of critic criticism is very much a matter of finding reasons for his likes and dislikes, and if he were not a nuisance he would be amusing, for he often shows great ingenuity in this. But much criticism is not at all amusing ; it is the criticism of educated stupidity—as one may say, of the learned pig. Our literary journals teem with it ; the other kind figures more prominently in the literary columns of our newspapers.

Many critics of to-day do not make even the pretence of being impartial ; they are either of the Right or of the Left, and the Centre, for both, is limbo (though it is by the centre that we move). They are not judges, they are advocates, special pleaders. One usually sees that in their opening words, and all that they have to say is thus invalidated.

Creative work and criticism are equally self-revelatory, but the self-revelations of criticism are the more damaging, because the critic is called on so often to do what he is incapable of doing. The author is in the far happier position of never being required to try himself beyond his powers. The difficulty of criticism appears with startling plainness in the present day when authors are so often reviewers. An author who can hide his defects while he sticks to authorship quickly exposes them when he takes to reviewing. Examples of this may be seen daily. No critic need therefore be ashamed of failure : he practises what is the most difficult perhaps of all the arts. And if the great critic is the rarest among all great artists, he is certainly not the least valuable, for he is the illuminator of art. By his efforts we see much that would otherwise he hidden from us, or which time would reveal much more tardily. It is necessary for him to condemn, but it is much more necessary for him to praise and exhibit; the one is destructive, the other creative, criticism.

Great writers, someone has said, are often great bores; but great bores are not always great writers; yet there seems to be an idea among some critics that they must be. When the critic is in a hurry or is a little out of his depth this is a very easy mistake to make. The great writer takes no pains not to bore us; if he is interesting himself that is enough for him. Also he is thorough, and everything receives its intrinsic value from him, whether we like it or not. That is one reason why the great artist makes his way slowly, while the small artist, continually on the alert not to weary or offend us, succeeds at once. Great art has all the qualities of life, and life can bore us intolerably. But from that it is very unsafe to argue that mere volume or length is a sign of greatness. It is more often the sign of a simple inability to concentrate and write concisely. That a man is to be judged by the volume of his work, whether in total output or single production, is a common current fallacy, springing from the present-day worship of mere magnitude. It is to put quantity before quality, a typical error of the day.

Besides this misleading factor of size, giving a false idea of importance, there is another which makes the pretentious not always readily distinguishable from the great. All great work abounds in faults. To triumph in spite of them is the sign and test of greatness. No writer has more faults than appear in Shakespeare, though now we pass them over because he is accepted. Much the same may be said of Dickens. The ordinary critic has usually a keen eye for detail but little depth or breadth of comprehension. Thus the faults spring at once to his eye, while the work as a whole, its scope and profundity, elude him. Consequently it often happens that great work comes in for sharp criticism by contemporaries, and can only be fairly viewed in time's perspective, or by a contemporary of the calibre of its author; and not everyone can, like Fitzgerald, have a Rossetti to rescue his Rubáiyát.

As for poetry, our particular concern, it must, first of all, stir the *blood*, that is, move us more than intellectually. If it does not, we may be sure that it is not poetry. To be enduring it must be memorable—memorable in the sense of claiming a place in the memory so that we find ourselves repeating it or referring to it. But we should not despise verse, unless it is apeing poetry. The office of verse, when there is a mind behind it, may be as valuable as any in literature other than that of poetry. We must recognize too that there are degrees in poetry, and that it is not necessary for a poet's survival that he should be a great poet. What is necessary is that he should be outstanding in his own class, and that his own particular work be so accomplished that it is done once and for all time. Many quite small poets have achieved this distinction and so live on. There is always room for the finest specimen of any kind in the Bibliological Garden.

Often an obscure poem will, on study, grow clear like a photographic print coming out, and we find that, although it is beyond paraphrase, its words convey its meaning as no other words could. In such a case the poet has gone almost but not quite beyond the limits of expression—he has gone at least beyond the limits of ordinary expression, and won that much more territory for us.

Finally, it is worth while to remember Keats' opinion, that the true poet is one who, like Shakespeare, is selfless enough to enter and be at home in the heart of anyone or anything. As we have remarked, one man's truth is another man's falsehood, and it is the great critic who can see truth in its diversity. The rest of us can at least be just if we beware of pride and prejudice.

S. W. POWELL.

Captain C. E. H. Jacobs, of Singapore, has been elected to the General Council as Representative in Malaya and the Far East.

SIT ON THE MOON AND SING

SIT on the moon and sing, brother,
Of strange, delirious, earthly things,
The shine of a gown or a peacock's wings,
Sit on the moon and sing.

Why does the purple ever fade
From the living dove,
The cross of love,
And why is no memory paid ?

A dew drop wilting in the sun
Is like a pang of death to me,
A madness in an ecstasy,
For colours glisten e'er they run.

Bathe the feet in idleness,
And taste a surfeit of delight
Before the devil sets it right,
Live a dream and like it less.

Everyone cannot be born a king
So weep for the misery of the Fall,
Or better by far not weep at all,
For Bliss is only a little thing.

Keep to the low roads and love them still,
The birds, the trees, and the running streams,
The softer glow from the pale moonbeams ;
But man has reason without a will.

So drop that fall from the block of ice
That butchers keep to cool their meat
Are mortals slipping from their seat
On the outward rim of Paradise.

JOHN WALLER.

ADAM'S GRAND-DAUGHTER

LISSOM and lithe she grew,
Sun-permeated as gold dew,
A brooding child
Alone and wild
With eyes of solemn waiting, wonder-dialled,
Her father Abel
Moved in her mind an untransparent fable,
Remote as grass
Unseen in a hill pass,
His face unviewed,
His form chameleon-hued,
And he, shepherding lambs and tracking sheep
Yet in a rock mound and unwaking sleep.

She told the children tales
Of prowling beasts and of sea whales,
Of birds that spoke,
Of a cruel oak,
And how a rock split when the tempest broke,
When the night fell
Suddenly on their tented citadel,
Her voice united
With the red torch late-lighted
To sink and rise
In flaming terror's guise,
Until the moon flying from night drew near,
And overhanging branches shook for fear. . . .

But she was fashion's slave :
Beyond the beauty nature gave
She sought out quills
From the cleft hills
And from the wild-bird caverns' rocky sills,
When she had traced
Some for her neck and hair, some for her waist,
Purple and green,
Cerise and tangerine,
Dressed in array
Of sunset caught at bay

She walked at evening to the tribal laughter,
The while the geese and pigeons strutted after.

Steadily on came dawn :
At daybirth satyr danced and faun,
In the pale East
The sun robed for a Feast
Leavened the heavy sky with living yeast ;
And Adamette
Watched the cool sunrise as she watched suns set,
With amazed eyes,
Deep-clouded with surmise,
Never the less
She toiled a shepherdess,
Watering sheep and tending a lone lamb
Before Methuselah and Abraham.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

LINUS SONG

I HEARD a woman weeping,
Beside the river reaping
In a field of golden corn.

Above her larks were singing
As under heaven winging
They praised the summer morn.

With joy the earth seemed shining,
She alone repining,
Only she forlorn.

Above the soft wind's sighing
I seemed to hear her crying,
" Alas, My Love, how long ? "

I could not know her sorrow,
But from her weeping borrow
A measure for my song.

MURIEL CRIGHTON.

I PLAY WITH WORDS

I PLAY with words, shape them with nimble fingers,
Take them and fashion them with my strong hands,
Drape naked thoughts with fluttering robes of sound,
Round phrases smooth as pebbles, cast my stone
Into the sleeping waters—sudden-spurting,
There, where it falls, I watch the leaping spray,
The little waves that run away, away,
Rising and falling, to the mind's horizon.

I toss my thoughts into the air, the fountain
Sends up its jet of silver, curving, breaking,
Making a diamond shower in the sun,
Perpetually, for ever, never still,
Until the heart stops beating, or the will
Flags on the confines of eternity.

I play with words, and with a flash of wings
From the mind's cage let free my coloured birds
That sing to the white morning, lost and still,
Where on the downy hill slow-moving herds
Crop the close pasture. I fill the desert air
With quivering notes, that dance before the wind,
A twined and shivering pattern of delight,
Brighter than dew-shine twinkling on the lawn,
Sprinkling the hedge-row, starring flower and tree
With transient silver.

I play with words, grim words of granite grey,
File rasping iron, knife on jarring bone,
Crude stone, rough-hewed, rude strength, barbaric power—
The cowering trees are bent before the storm,
The lightning runs in vivid streaks of fire
Across the lowering heaven, the shuddering cloud
Is split with thunder ; under the wild sky,
Storm-tossed, foam-churned, wind-scourged, the angry sea
Heaves to the zenith, plunges to the deep,
Steep hills and flowing valleys, rising, falling,
With frenzied energy, with naked power,

Grim words, grey words ; gaunt in the desert sand
The white bones gleam, the haunted shadows creep
About the graves of the unhallowed dead,
Where sleep is tortured into haggard dream ;
Black on a crimson sky the gallows stand,
Red as the hand, stark as the cruel knife,
That with one callous thrust sped to the dark
The life that lust had grappled to its own.

I play with words, smooth words, that soothe endeavour
To dreams of lulled content ; the twilight air
Drops its grey veil of breathing quietness
On wood and vale and hill, cool darkness flows
About the jagged edges of the world,
Curled in repose the tired heart forgets
The cares that fret the day, the level snows
Stretch in unending peace away, away,
To meet the silence of the sky ; slow time
Beats out the measure of its solemn grief,
With a serenity no blows of fate
Can utterly destroy, until swift death
Comes with the shadow of his brooding wing
To bring life's day its dreamless recompense.
W. R. LATHAM.

NOW RAINS THE WILLOW

NOW rains the willow
above the swollen stream,
and in the chestnut shadows
the little lanterns gleam.

Now dips the swallow
across the glittering pond,
light as the winds that rustle
the poplar boughs beyond.

Now sadder than the willow
that weeps above the burn,
and swifter than the swallow
the buried days return.
RONALD FULLER.

SPEED

NO lingering in gardens ; if there's nothing
To do or to be done, no way of working
That can endure, no skill against disaster,
At least we keep illusion, in moving faster.

Quiet held foolish dreams ; the slender lily
Broke long ago, petals and stars fall daily,
Crushed into mud by time's great wheel ; and passion
That's not soon over, is long out of fashion.

Speed, then, be our escape. No use in looking ;
Beauty's a drug from which comes bitter waking.
Wind on the cheek is real, screaming and biting,
Cold makes us gasp, corners are close, exciting.

Thought is outpaced, impossible, engines rocking :
Surely, here's conquest. Sight and speech are lacking
—Tools for pretence—all dropped, as we go faster,
Except the great illusion of being master.

MOLLY WALKER.

NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATION

SEVEN, with eyes turned right,
Behind the policeman's horizontal arm :
The short man in a burberry ; the tall
Bareheaded man with horn-rimmed glasses ;
The women with shopping-bags and leather cases :
On these the quick
Slick shutter like Tower of Siloam fell.

That eye accuses them of even grief :
Heaped silt of care no single joy or grief
Had size to cancel.
How, there, would the single
Mood on a saint's face, or a child's, have shown,
Have shone !—like yellow rocket
At dusk, or in soiled street laburnum :
Spared the quick verdict of that single eye.

N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

ENCHANTMENT

(Oakville, Ontario, Canada)

THE garden by the river sleeps,
And dreams away the summer hours,
And holds the petals of its flowers
Unshed in its still, scented bowers—
The river by the garden sleeps. . . .

The garden by the river weeps,
In autumn rain 'mid falling flowers,
And all its beauty trembling cowers
Beneath the leaden sky that lowers—
The river by the garden weeps.

The garden by the river sleeps—
The snow-white sleep of death o'erpowers,
And wraithlike lies on turf and towers,
—Yet resurrection life endowers—
The river by the garden sleeps.

CHRISTINE L. HENDERSON.

INCENSE

HERE I burn the greenling ways
Of bumblebees on summer days :
Rich meadowsweet and twitchen grass,
Moondaisies, where the gold flies pass,
Cornflowers, love-in-a-mist—once blue—
With the dried heads of feverfew,
And hollyhock stems, lorn of their pride
Flung by the hedgerow cuttings' side,
Lavender stems and rosemary tips,
Where hawkmoth or the hive-bee sips,
All dry and brown, neglected, dead
—No dream recalls the scent they shed.

But as the smoke with floating twist
Wreathes apple-trees in silken mist,
Surely its incense reaches God
Who stars with life my garden's sod.

A.D.L.W.

BIOGRAPHY

SO I am asked to write your history,
Present you to the public for a fee. . . .
Partners we were, and since our work was one,
They come to me with greedy, curious eyes
(Who cares for science? Give us the human touch!)
And pray me for a frank and nearer view—
One that the greasy public feasts upon!

How you would shout with laughter could you see
Me lying here before the study fire,
Twisting my pencil, ruffling my hair,
Trying to capture you in portraiture!

But would you smile or would you look away
Shamefaced and sorry, could you stoop and see
My thoughts, that like the silver-gleaming fish
Rise to the surface of my troubled mind,
Send ripples upon ripples till the whole
Is ringed with but one presence, and diffused
With light now lost, but homed and husbanded . . . ?

No more . . . the book . . . how end and how begin . . .
But when I think of you, I never see
The man men thought they knew or seemed to be;
And I—the side that you would turn to me—
Ah! that were breach and harlotry indeed!
I dare not summon now your charm, your grace,
And trivial things alone come back to me:
The way you smiled on one side of your face,
The way your eyes met mine in teasing me.
Yet if in cold analysis I draw
Selfless devotion to an arduous cause,
How will men guess the warm humanity
That lay like summer balm across your path?
Oh, it would seem that anyone but I
Could take and make your life a living thing
That he who runs may read a just surmise!
But I, too close am I to spell your name—

Too ruptured inwardly by sudden death,
To see you separate from love's embrace,
And I can only dream and meditate.

BRENDA F. SKENE.

TORCH-BEARERS

THEY who do love, and give with quiet joy
From garnered memories of busy years
Now past ; and near the fount of unwept tears
Who yield no ground to sorrow's bleak alloy ;
They who do strive, and scorning care of self
Shall lend their fellow-pilgrims hours of bliss,
Seeking to guide where leaders are amiss
And many men are scheming plans of pelf :
These are the race of prophets, loved of Heaven,
The vanguard men upholding sacred fire,
Amidst a sordid world they are a leaven—
Proclaim their praise, bring forth the youthful lyre !

They seek the spires beyond the farthest hills
Where Truth her simple promise swift fulfils.

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

BOUNDS

LIKE distant bluebirds' wings that dip and soar,
Enchanted mountain peaks dream high in air ;
And waves in travail from their bosoms tear
White foam to fling as far as heaven's door.
The kingly pine, with melody's magic lore,
In skyey plains sets his soft music's snare ;
The lark sings near the netted sun's bright lair,
And lofty eagle spurns the world's low floor.
But bird comes back to nest on crag or plain,
The tree is rooted deep beneath the sod,
And towering hill and wave like any clod
Are meted as eternal laws ordain ;
Man's soul alone, in mystery profound,
Takes unreturning flight past earthly bound.

GERTRUDE DARLING.

THE QUEST

WHEN you ask how old I am
I say a thousand years.
I saw all my ladies die
And the red lilies bloomed
And the white lilies withered
'Tis circumstance that kills not time.
And he digs a thousand graves
In one short day.

Do the hearts of the rose and the tiger ache?
What is the aching heart for?
And the questing mind?
The blade of grass and the white ant knows
Nothing of its strange inheritance
Or whither it goes.
Books have been written and read
In the beginning life was a mouth
And God is dead.

And yesterday the fire burned
Brilliantly until the evening
The cold chill of the evening
Opened its grey withering hand
Let loose the damp clinging loveless mist
Hanging an impenetrable curtain of lead
Twixt us and the fire
Dead.

'Twas circumstance that tilted the mind
Sent it out on its reasoning quest
And the fire burned itself out
Lacking a hand to feed it
With immortal fuel.
Only the grey ashes are left
Even they will be blown far and wide
Leaving the place where so lately
The fire flickered—void
And the power from the Central Force
Unheeding the incompetent mind
Takes its illimitable course.

But what is the aching heart for,
And the unappeased questing mind?
LANGFORD BUDVILLE.

ABSENCE

NOW you are gone, and will no more arise,
I find the pain of thought too great to bear.
All light for me lay 'prisoned in your hair,
I warmed myself before your steady eyes.
So cold, so charnel cold this blazing moon!
Your heavy tresses hide the sun from me,
And through the night I know that I can see
Your two pale hands across the darkened moon.
Would it be better if my slow mind knew
That you were dead, and did not ache and burn
With every sound,—expecting your return?
Does time heal everything? Can it be true
That these edged thoughts that rip the soul from me
Shall soon be but a pleasant memory?
KATHLEEN ANDERSON.

IN MEMORY OF FREDERICK DELIUS

FOR you there were no flowers. Earth withdrew
Her green and gold and amber from your dreams.
Darkness alone remained to weave your themes
Of subtle beauty, Darkness—from which grew
Some deeper radiance of unearthly hue,
Some vision borne on deep ethereal streams
Of inner beauty. Falling night, it seems,
Was but the dawn of deathless day for you.

Was it because of this your spirit heard
The song within the song, and you became
The soul that is the singing of a bird?
Was it because of this you saw the flame
Of inner loveliness withheld from eyes
Blinded by too much sight and earthly-wise?
EVELYN COUCHMAN.

EDWARD THOMAS: FROM PROSE TO POETRY

THE commemorative stone has been duly unveiled on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill in Hampshire and the tablet has been placed on Berryfield Cottage at the foot of the hill: but every memorial is also a memorial to the inadequacy of the heart of man—as doubly significant as the neat signpost of the National Trust set up in the England Edward Thomas loved so faithfully.

Tchehov once wrote to Gorki: " You are an artist, a wise man; you feel superbly, you are plastic; that is, when you describe a thing you see it and touch it with your hands." The natural world created in Edward Thomas not a rich Lawrentian ecstasy nor a tortured mysticism like that of Richard Jefferies but a profound tranquillity of soul, a " stability without regret or fear "; and the writing of Edward Thomas, whether in prose or in poetry and whatever its subject, is the work of a man who touched, who was tender, who was simple, as Tchehov and (at times) Gorki were tender and simple.

After a brief attempt to write poetry in his boyhood, under the influence of Shelley and Keats, Thomas, as is well-known, did not turn to poetry until his middle thirties; nor was it of his own initiative that he attempted the writing of poetry in later years but at the suggestion of a friend. It was Robert Frost, the American poet, who urged him to attempt verse form: and it was an Army life which brought to Thomas freedom from hack-work, and, with its regularity and activity, improved health and a mind less harassed by despair. All his poems were written in the last two and a half years of his life and a collection of them was in the press when he was killed instantaneously in 1917.

When Robert Frost made the suggestion to Thomas he pointed out passages in Thomas's book, *In Pursuit of Spring*, and advised him to use the cadence of those passages in his verse form. " Right at that moment he was writing as good poetry as anybody alive, but in prose form where it did not declare itself and gain him recognition."[1] Likely guesses can be made as to the particularity of those passages, and the following may have been one of them :

> The night was wild, and on the morrow the earth lay sleeping a sweet, quiet sleep of recovery from the wind's rage. The robin could be heard as often as the missel-thrush. The sleep lasted through a morning of frost and haze into a clear day, gentle but bright, and another and another of cloudy brightness, brightened cloudiness, rounded off between half-past five and half-past six by blackbirds singing. The nights were strange children for such days, nights of frantic wind and rain, threatening to undo all the sweet work in a swift, howling revolution. Trees were thrown down, branches broken, but the buds remained.

The quietness, or the flow of lengthy stretches of syllables over which the stress is almost equal, is typical ; a gentle quickening of the pace by phrases between commas, repetition of syllables or words and alliteration—these are also readily noticeable, although less typical. On the basis of form some distinction between prose and poetry can be elaborated but this distinction is of a limited nature. Poetry, in the sense of poetic content, is a matter of degree, and is not confined to verse form ; and it is a truism that no strict boundary line can possibly be made so far as poetic content is concerned. It is thus essential in a consideration of the poetry of Edward Thomas to have in mind his prose, or at any rate certain moods of his prose ; although, as de la Mare suggested in the Warton Lecture, " Poetry in Prose," the problems of poetry and prose poetry in a sense begin at opposite poles, for what is overt in the one is hidden in the other, prose poetry being the art of perpetual narrow evasion. Imperfections in the poetry of Edward Thomas are sometimes ultimately referred to his brief use of a new form. But, for certain of these imperfections, it is more exact to attribute them to an apprenticeship of prose poetry.

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[1] For this quotation and certain of the facts in this and the preceding paragraph I am indebted to Mr. Robert Eckert's *Edward Thomas : a Biography and a Bibliography.*

A poem might possess both uncertainty of technique and an incomplete transcendence of prose but the former by no means necessarily implies the latter.

In many of Thomas's poems, and such poems are usually of the kind which might conveniently be called nature poems, the advance in poetic statement is seen chiefly in the economy which is inevitable in verse form. There has been little tightening of loose prose rhythms; and rhyme, if present, is often faulty or an eye-rhyme only—a rhyme " at any price " :

> Tall nettles cover up, as they have done
> These many springs, the rusty harrow, the plough
> Long worn out, and the roller made of stone :
> Only the elm butt tops the nettles now.
>
> This corner of the farmyard I like most :
> As well as any bloom upon a flower
> I like the dust on the nettles, never lost
> Except to prove the sweetness of a shower.

Or again, the opening lines of " The Sign-Post " :

> The dim sea glints chill. The white sun is shy,
> And the skeleton weeds and the never-dry,
> Rough, long grasses keep white with frost
> At the hilltop by the finger-post;
> The smoke of the traveller's-joy is puffed
> Over hawthorn berry and hazel tuft . . .

In the absence of rhyme there may be an even greater freedom or lack of form :

> The rock-like mud unfroze a little and rills
> Ran and sparkled down each side of the road
> Under the catkins wagging in the hedge.
> But earth would have her sleep out, spite of the sun ;
> Nor did I value that thin gilding beam
> More than a pretty February thing
> Till I came down to the old Manor Farm,
> And church and yew-tree opposite, in age
> Its equals and in size. The church and yew
> And farmhouse slept in a Sunday silentness.
> The air raised not a straw. . . .

Yet this freedom of form can yield :

They have taken the gable from the roof of clay
On the long swede pile. They have let in the sun
To the white and gold and purple of curled fronds
Unsunned. It is a sight more tender-gorgeous
At the wood-corner where Winter moans and drips
Than when, in the Valley of the Tombs of Kings,
A boy crawls down into a Pharaoh's tomb
And, first of Christian men, beholds the mummy,
God and monkey, chariot and throne and vase,
Blue pottery, alabaster, and gold.

But dreamless long-dead Amen-hotep lies.
This is a dream of Winter, sweet as Spring.

But the degree of essentiality of this " perpetual evasion " must be judged poem by poem ; examples, although varying in pattern, only repeat a number of elements.

Edward Thomas's apprehension of objectivity was the apprehension of a long mature imagination ; and his nature was above all contemplative. The still clarity of the vision of such an imagination has its attendant risk of failure ; for too keen a sense of eternity may hold back creation. Although it is impossible to trace this metaphysical difficulty with any definiteness in the poems it is possible it was affective in the expression of his vision. Perhaps too, his remarkable power of observation and care in recording were, paradoxically, a source of difficulty in transcending prose intensity and form.

> This took me over broad and almost hedgeless fields, and through a short disconnected fragment of an avenue of mossy-rooted beeches, to West Dean Farm. Nothing lay between the houseless road and the hillside, which is thick here with yew, except two broad arable fields, with a square or two given to mustard flowers and sheep, and West Dean Farm itself. It is a house of dirty white colour, and amidst numerous and roomy outbuildings, thatched and mellow-tiled, set in a circle of tall beeches. The road bends round the farm group and goes straight to the foot of the hill, and then along it.

Running along a bank, a parapet
That saves from the precipitous wood below
The level road, there is a path. It serves

> Children for looking down the long smooth steep,
> Between the legs of beech and yew, to where
> A fallen tree checks the sight. . . .

The eye which missed nothing and saw each thing as part of a whole is also in the poetry ; but such detailed uniformly focussed attention belongs more properly to prose.

In some of his poems, a conversational, seemingly casual diction is used. In " The Child on the Cliff " it is used with beautiful urgency :

> Mother, the root of this little yellow flower
> Among the stones has the taste of quinine.
> Things are strange to-day on the cliff. The sun shines so bright,
> And the grasshopper works at his sewing-machine
> So hard. Here's one on my hand, mother, look ;
> I lie so still. There's one on your book. . . .

It is, however, the poems of a less static, less detailed mood—the poems of a more lyrical mood—by which Thomas is chiefly known :

> Out of us all
> That make rhymes,
> Will you choose
> Sometimes—
> As the winds use
> A crack in the wall
> Or a drain,
> Their joy or their pain
> To whistle through—
> Choose me,
> You English words ?

And in these poems, the poems of love and the poems less tied to particularity of occasion or scene, he found poetic freedom before he died : a low singing, rarely lovely freedom, which was for the most part a vital refinement of his soft prose rhythms. He found freedom in " The Unknown," " No One So Much As You," in " Words," " Some Eyes Condemn," " After You Speak," the well-known " Roads," " Lights Out," " Out In the Dark," and others :

Out in the dark over the snow
The fallow fawns invisible go
With the fallow doe;
And the winds blow
Fast as the stars are slow.

Stealthily the dark haunts round
And, when the lamp goes, without sound
At a swifter bound
Than the swiftest hound,
Arrives, and all else is drowned; . . .

Yet when these poems are read aloud one thing needs particular attention, it has been found; the following may be of some general validity. In certain lines and passages—and these are often at the end of a poem—there is a disagreement between the structural pace, and the pace demanded by the meaning of the whole poem, or the imaginative awareness which produced the poem and the emotion accompanying that awareness. When, for instance, "Out In the Dark" is read, the pace of utterance has deliberately to be held back because this is not sufficiently controlled by the structure: throughout the poem, and especially in the last verse, and the break too, between the third and last verse has to be controlled with some care. Or, as another example, "No One So Much as You," where the short lines, so easily read with eye and voice, are perhaps too swift for the extreme tenderness they would express:

No one so much as you
Loves this my clay,
Or would lament as you
Its dying day.

You know me through and through
Though I have not told,
And though with what you know
You are not bold.

None ever was so fair
As I thought you:
Not a word can I bear,
Spoken against you . . .

Thomas did not achieve a high poetic compulsion. For such a compulsion his nature may have been too gentle, too contemplative; and we cannot be sure that a further development of technique would have been of the same order as his sincerity. His poetical history, it must be remembered, shows no stubborn impulse to write poetry. Surely it is significant that the early attempt at poetry was soon abandoned and that it was only at the suggestion of another that he turned to verse form in later years? For a full reading of his poetry there must be brought to it something of his own tenderness, his own tranquillity and simplicity of soul. His simplicity and love were those of greatness. But only by something of that simple love can the full measure of his worth be known.

> O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
> This one last gift I give: that after men
> Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,
> Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

THERESA ASHTON.

COMPLETION

IT is complete:
This little hill where pluming pine woods meet
The pluming clouds
And curlews rise in ecstasy of song
The sweet day long.

It is complete:
This little day that falls too soon to rose
And petals close,
When silence gathers music to her breast
And all is rest.

It is complete:
This little life that is the only thing
We have and sing
That love is all of life we need to know
Before we go.

PHOEBE RAYNER.

TO A GEISHA

HOW memorable is that night
of the bland heathen moon,
at which I bowed
before bed !

You smiled, I remember, and said
I know not what of beautiful,
reminding me, O goldenly !
with round, red-blossomed whispering lips
and smooth, smooth skin,
of a tree,
my monkey-slip !

At which, O all your sweet, sweet face
up-dawned with surprise,
and lo ! the light of laughter
broke out of your eyes.

How puzzled you grew,
my Yokohama chit,
laughing pert and light,
when
from outside in the dead
drowse of the cool, mooned night
woke discord, by chance, and song,
and noise of busy work
that was to last the whole night long
till the cock should crow :

A tawny wail of youths
and noise of their thudding pestles
as they husked hard barley
out there in the cool, cool night.

How dear dare I hold you ?—
I shall never quit you,
nor this quiet rural inn
of the fragrant persimmons :
not for the Son of Heaven,
no, not for all the Emperors in Peking.

But soft :
see how the charmèd night
makes of your every movement,
makes every pass of yours
a ritual,
a mystic ritual of love
down-handed from the ages, when
we unborn clay were—
wares of shone porcelain in a house
in China,
translucent, pure, beflowered. . .

My yellow cotton flower
with the dark amber eye,
how memorable was that night !

W. Dennis Hinde.

Miss H. T. D. Robinson, of St. Petersburg, Florida, on renewing her membership subscription, writes : " Not for a great deal would I miss The Poetry Review. Since 1932 I have been editing a column in a Toronto, Canada, quarterly magazine, and, until the recent visitation of sickness and death in the family, I had appeared in a number of magazine articles and radio programmes. Each year I have urged my readers and listeners to subscribe to The Poetry Review, and have lent to friends many of my copies. The Poetry Review articles are indispensable to me—rich with ' vitamin ' content. Among all the magazines that I receive there is nothing to compare with yours."

THE PILGRIMAGE OF DANTE

GIOVANNI PAPINI in his admirable *Dante Vivo* (the living Dante) has stated that what is really known of Dante's life could be written on half a page ; but that a man's lifetime is insufficient for the study of his works. This is very true, and it renders it all the more difficult to decide what one can write about in a short article designed to form an introduction to the poet's chief work. The most one can do, it seems to me, is to cast a few beams of light onto certain salient points in this vast territory which have especially interested one, and hope that they may become foci or centres of exploration from which the minds of the readers may voyage at their later leisure.

To every lover of Dante it will seem that there are two Dantes—the Dante of popular legend and the true Dante, which is of course the particular Dante he knows. The Dante of popular legend is known to all of us : a tall, emaciated, monastic figure with an austere face of extraordinary severity, a severity matched only by the unyielding and monastic rigour of a nature which hardship and vicissitude had tempered to steel and trained to contempt of worldly pleasures. That, of course, like all legends, is partly true. But there was another and a more complicated Dante, naturally more complicated, because really human, in spite of legends. When a man has been worshipped by other men for centuries he becomes almost a myth, a legendary hero of supernatural proportions. That this has happened in the case of Dante is our excuse for examining what human attributes and failings he had that may bring him nearer to us, and make him perhaps less titanic but more lovable.

Dante, both in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, takes as his primary classification of sins the mediaeval category of the seven deadly sins, Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, Lust. His own treatment of these is singularly original and of profound insight. In this way : that the sin of lust, while it receives the most painful of the seven purgations in the *Purgatorio*, is punished most lightly of all the sins in hell. Pride, which is most lightly punished in

Purgatory, is condemned in Hell to the lowest depths of Styx, and only the deeper sins which involve perversion or misuse of the mental powers of man (that is sins of brutish violence and fraud) are punished more heavily. This is right, for pride was the first known sin, and most easily separates a man from the universal stream ; but it is doubtful if its roots go so deep as the warmer, more human sins of passion, and the eradication of these is therefore harder.

If we study the known facts of Dante's life, and particularly what he says of himself in his writings, we shall acquit him, I think, of Envy, Sloth and Gluttony.

Pride he certainly had, and pride casts out envy. He admits that he will have to suffer in Purgatory for pride. His vehemence and violence in anger were a byword ; and we must note that even in his living journey through Purgatory, he was hurt by the " foul and bitter air " of the third terrace, where wrath was punished. The only other circle of Purgatory where he suffers the pains of purgation in passing through is the seventh where lust is punished. Here he is burned with their fire and says " I would have flung myself into molten glass to cool myself." A careful study of Dante's works, along with the writings of early biographers, notably Boccaccio, make it fairly certain that Dante had known in their full violence the stings of physical passion; and we must bear in mind that the three beasts, the Lion, the Leopard, and the She-wolf by which he was menaced and impeded in Canto I of the *Inferno*, signify almost certainly Pride and Anger, Lust, Avarice respectively, and that in *Inferno* XVI he speaks of being girt with the cord of the Franciscans " with which I once had hoped to catch that Leopard of the painted skin."

I mentioned Avarice last—the She-Wolf, " the coldest sins of all the seven, and separated most from Heaven." Are we to suppose that Dante lay under the shadow of that sin, as well as of Pride, Anger and Lust ? The idea seems foreign to our conception of poetic generosity, and I do not think that we will. That the pride of Dante dreaded poverty as a curse is undeniably true ; to him the bread of charity was salt to bitterness ; and in so far as Avarice is the negative of the Christian love of poverty which St. Francis for one exemplified, Dante must admit its stain, as must nearly all of us. For true Franciscans are rare. I doubt if the onset of the She-Wolf in *Inferno*, Canto I, need be taken as indicating a deeper stain than this.

We shall not ascribe to our poet any of the blacker crimes—those arising from violence, fraud or treachery—which were punished below the City of Dis, though some commentators have argued from the grave danger in which he found himself in Bolgia 5 of the 8th Circle that he had at some time been guilty of the crime of barratry. I think rather that in the assault of the demons in this episode he typifies the dangers to which he had himself been subjected by unscrupulous members of his City's councils, and that one who loved Florence as ardently as he did would be unlikely to mishandle her public funds.

For the rest, Dante could show a cruel disposition, as the episodes of Filippo Argenti and Bocca degli Abati, to name only two in the *Inferno*, clearly show. He has, as regards his emotions, an almost feminine inconsistency and very real timidity of heart. "Lacrime" and "paura," "tears" and "fear," abound in the same Inferno where he tears out Bocca's hair and complacently breaks his promise to Alberigo to remove the crusts of ice from the eyes of the latter. And the story of Paolo and Francesca affects him with so strong an emotion of pity that he swoons away for sorrow, as a short while before he had done for fear when the vermilion lightning flashed its wrath over Acheron. We are left in the end with a sense of strange but human inconsistency of character: of cruelty mixed with tenderness, of religious fervour streaked and coloured with lines of sin; in short, of a man. And it may very well be argued that with the possible exception of our Shakespeare he was the truest poet for strength of line, for purity of fire, for depth of vision and for sheer strength of building, the greatest who ever put a pen to paper.

Words are easy. I can say that. To show it, is another thing; strange enough to feel for oneself how an edifice of such strength, harmony and beauty can be raised out of the weakness, the smallness, the inconsistency of a man. One cannot hope to prove it. And even in attempting the proof, by arguing from the *Divina Commedia*, I have to give fragments, where no fragmentation should be made.

I will say first of the *Comedy* as a whole, that the popular conception of it, which sees it as falling away from the surge and thunder of the *Inferno* through a mild but pleasant *Purgatorio* into the bathos of a tamely theological and barely readable *Paradiso*, is in my own view an entirely erroneous estimate of the real relative value of the three Canticles. Actually the reverse is the case, and the whole work mounts with steady and unerring aim to an almost incredible climax.

This prevalent misconception arises, I think, partly from the more spectacular and dramatic character of the *Inferno*,—its pictures are more easily realized,—and partly from the so-called practical trend of much modern thought which does not readily fall in tune with religious and mystical fervour. In this matter I can only say what I believe to be true: that in the deeper sense the things of the mystic are the most practical of all. Certainly an attentive ear will not fail to recognize that for glory of sound and wide range of poetical tone-colour, the *Paradiso* is the loftiest peak of Dante's work.

This wide range of tones is Dante's chief musical characteristic. He can be harsh and grating with clashing consonants to depict hatred and contempt; triumphant and serene with beauty as in many passages in the *Paradiso* where liquid consonants give a sense of calm and infinite space. Other verses chime with the pealing and clashing of bells, march with the tramp of arms and the jingle of cavalry, or still more often dance with ecstatic happiness as in the ascent through the sphere of Fire. Some of them are filled in their sound with mystery deep as the words themselves, as in the strange sonorous blend of Latin and Hebrew which forms the Prelude to Beatrice's great discourse on the Redemption of Mankind by Jesus; this music has something of the fatalistic tone of the Greek mask. Especially in the frequent invective passages, we find verses that seem almost to hiss and snarl with rage as in the diatribe against those who sold pardons, or in the still fiercer lines where Peter in Heaven denounces the simoniacal Popes, and Dante shows how well he knew the poetic value of repetition.

Many attempts have been made to define the *Divina Commedia* in a few words. It has been called a retaliation and a revenge, a Last Judgment anticipated, a miracle of the Blessed Virgin. I would call it a supernatural mirror of the world. For it does indeed embrace both the seen and the unseen universes, and makes of one a reflection of the other. Even Dante's dead are living, and their continued life parallels their earthly one. Let us look a little more closely at some of the chief characteristics of this great masterpiece.

It is firstly the work of a teacher who desired by this work in his own words " to remove those who are living in this life from the state of wretchedness, and to lead them to the state of blessedness." How was this to be accomplished? Firstly by a reform of the Church, the natural spiritual guide of man. This is perhaps the meaning of the problem of the Veltro, the greyhound destined to drive back the wolf of Avarice into Hell: a cleansing wind of the Spirit of God, which would purify the Church and especially the Papacy of its lust for riches and temporal power and restore it to its pristine purity and power over the minds of men. Hence also the frequent invectives against the ecclesiastical worship of gold and silver.

Secondly, it is the work of a statesman who realized that the temporal needs of man must be cared for in this life as well as the spiritual. This may well be the interpretation of the second great problem of the *Commedia* the " five hundred ten and five " prophesied by Beatrice, the dxv or dux, the Leader, who would reduce the Empire of the world to universal peace, as it had once been in the days of Augustus Caesar. With Church and State thus firmly settled, each in its place, neither trespassing on the domain of the other, but both indispensable, man would be free to grow in goodness and therefore in happiness as he should.

Lastly and chiefly, it is the work of a poet. Of his music

I have already spoken. His other poetic gifts are as real and as rare. Indeed, great poetry must be composed with many things beside music. Let us consider some of the other poetic qualities which especially distinguish the work of Dante.

I think its first and perhaps its most important characteristic is its intense vividness, its concrete definiteness of line. That the *Commedia* abounds in pictures is obvious to the most cursory reader; but the matter is deeper than that in this way, that I do not think Dante ever uses an abstraction where a concrete image can possibly be employed. Whether he works by metaphor or simile (which he prefers), the exact figure is always there. St. Dominic is "il santo atleta," the sacred athlete of the Church, and no word could better express the nature of this most ruthless and militant of spiritual reformers. And he and Francis alike are called "wheels of the chariot of the Church."

When the poets meet the Centaurs in the valley of the Violent, by the river of scalding blood, Chiron, we are told, before speaking "took an arrow and with the notch put back his beard upon his jaws." Strange, but vivid!

The barrators in Bolgia 5 arch their backs out of the boiling pitch for a moment's respite, "like dolphins"; and one of them caught by the demons, haled out with a hook through his "pitchy locks," resembles an otter. Adam of Brescia has a torso "shaped like a lute" with dropsy. The ice at the bottom of the funnel of Hell is so thick that you could have dropped two mountains on it without cracking it, and the damned souls frozen in it shine through "like straws in glass." Bertran de Born, among the sowers of discord, carries his own head, "swinging it in his hand like a lantern."

When Dante issues from the underworld to the clear air again, standing on the shore of the Mount of Purgatory, he sees the dawn come over the sea, and paints it in three vivid, perfect lines:—

> "And now Aurora irresistibly
> Drove down the light winds, so that from afar
> I recognized the trembling of the sea,"

Sunset is the time—

> "Which fills with love who'er is far away
> From his own home, when he hears distant bells
> Mourn with sad notes the passing of the day."

And the angels which guard this evening in Purgatory trail behind them raiment "Green, as tender leaves just born." How rightly the colour of Hope!

The envious, with their eyes sewn up in Purgatory, sit like blind beggars in a row; "and one rests his head upon the other." And that night, high up the mountain of Purgatory, the poet sees how—

> "The moon retarded now to near midnight
> Came forth and made the stars more rare and thin,
> In fashion of a bucket burning bright."

And in the Garden of Eden which crowns the mountain, the new purple foliage with which the Griffin dresses the tree of Knowledge, is described as "less red than roses, more than violets."

The Heaven of the Moon receives Dante and Beatrice within itself, "as water doth receive a ray of light, itself remaining uncleft," and the spirits in that Heaven appear, "as from water calm and clear, yet not so deep that the bottom may not be seen, the faint images of our faces are reflected to us." And "as in a fish-pond, still and clear, the fishes draw to the food thrown in," so in the Heaven of Mercury the splendours of light gather round them. The crown of glowing fires that circles them in the sun, pauses "like ladies, not released from the dance, but waiting in silence, listening till they catch the notes again." The flaming spirit of Cacciaguida courses along the cross of Mars "like fire burning behind alabaster." And in Jupiter the swarms of spirits rise and fly and wheel "as at the smiting of burnt brands, there rise countless sparks," and "as birds, risen from the bank, where they have fed, make of themselves now a round, now a long flock." In Saturn the spirit of Peter Damiani, in the contemplation of God, makes "his mid point a centre and whirls around like to a swift millstone." In the Heaven of the Stars where all the redeemed are manifested, the speed of their dancing varies "as wheels in clockwork so turn that the first seems to stand still, the last to fly"—one of the boldest images in a poem full of courage. The Angels in the Primum Mobile are glowing and swift "as iron shoots forth sparkles when it boils"; and their numbers run to "thousands beyond the multiplication of the chess-board." Those same angels who in the Empyrean, the final court of Heaven.

> "Faces they had all made of living flame,
> With wings of gold, and all the rest so white
> New-fallen snow ne'er to such whiteness came,"—

that Empyrean where, at the height of his vision, the poet, looking on God, sees "bound by love into one volume, the scattered leaves of all the Universe—as though fused together in such wise that all of which I speak is one single flame." I have given but a few out of thousands of instances of Dante's vividness and pictorial power I might as easily have selected.

Along with vivid power of imagery he has those other equally necessary poetic gifts, concentration and precision. I doubt if anyone ever lived who could pack more into a few words than Dante. I would instance especially the famous curse over the gates of Hell; and in Paradise the story of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, which the Emperor Justinian sketches in perfect outline and proportion in the space of sixty lines of verse,—a glowing tapestry of words which finds no parallel, except perhaps in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

His precision is at all times minute and meticulous. So accurately are the dimensions of Hell sketched out in many places, that enthusiasts have been known to try to make scale models of it. We are told, for instance, of the 10th Bolgia that "it is eleven miles round and not less than half-a-mile across." The first cornice round the mount of Purgatory is 18 feet wide. The double crown of glowing splendours which revolves around Beatrice in the Heaven of the Sun is spaced out like the parallel arcs of a double rainbow. And the discourse on Faith in the Heaven of the Stars has all the formal precision of a logical treatise.

Dante is a poet and those who wish to know him must visit him in his own domain. In other words, they must read him in the "dolce stil nuovo," of the Tuscan tongue in which he wrote. No translation of any poet, least of all perhaps of Dante, can render the original with complete justice and truth. That is not to say that the translations may not be in themselves enjoyable and even profound and valuable reading, whether they be prose translations, specializing chiefly in utility, like Carlyle's translation of the *Inferno*, or verse translations aiming also at beauty of line, like the translations of Cary—the most famous—of Longfellow and of Laurence Binyon.

My own personal feeling is one of intense dislike for translation into decasyllabic blank verse like those of Longfellow and—especially—of Cary. These seem to accentuate the fulminating and pedagogic aspect of Dante, at the expense of his precision and strength of line. English is far less rich in rhyme than Italian, and this renders the maintenance of so long a flight of full Terza-Rima almost impossible without strain and artificiality. The best way, I think, is a compromise, in a form which I have seen, in which the rhyme-scheme, instead of Dante's aba bcb cdc ded . . . becomes aba cdc efe ghg . . . giving some of the effect at least of the closed terzine, with a little greater freedom of choice.

I have already given one or two instances of this form of translation and will conclude this article with a longer translation of a portion of the *Paradiso*, the place where Dante, having just entered the Empyrean, sees the heavenly hosts of angels and souls in their first symbolic form as by the stream of Time, before this changes to the Ring of Eternity:

> "And like the sudden lightning flash which brings
> The power of sight to naught and robs the eye
> Of all seeing, even of the brightest things,
>
> So was I in a web of living light
> Wrapped and enswathed in such a golden glow
> Of dazzling splendour, blinded was my sight.
>
> 'The Love which maketh quiet our desire

Ever receives us with this salutation
Rightly to fit the taper for the fire—'

I heard and as these words came into me,
I felt me to surpass my proper power,
Kindled with fire anew, and I could see

With such keen-pointed range and strength of sight,
No brightness is, however, unalloyed,
But I could meet the fulness of its light.

And light I saw in form of a river wide
Tawny of splendour, that flowed calm between
Banks painted bright with colours of spring-tide.

And from the stream there leapt forth living sparks
On every side, that dropped into the flowers
And glowed like rubies set in golden arcs.

Then as though drunken with the odours there,
They plunged again into the wondrous swirl,
Ever replaced by others still as fair.

'That keen desire that flames and presses thee
To have more knowledge of these hidden things,
The more it burns, the more it pleases me;

But of this water to satiety
Needs must thou drink before so great a thirst
Be slaked:' so spoke my eyes' sweet sun to me.

Then added, 'All this stream and the bright elves
Of flying topaz-gems and smiling grasses
Are but the shadows of their real selves:

Not that such things are difficult to know,
But on thy part there is defect of sight
That untrained may not be exalted so.'"

Such fire and beauty is in the original, that I think it must shine through, even in the poorest translation, with some at least of its Divine Light.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

The Secretary of The Poetry Society will be glad to hear from prospective members who wish to be attached to centres now being formed at Tiverton, Chester and Manchester.

GHOSTS

NO spirit came ; yet leaden grief so stamps
In minds that grieve men's features when they die,
Our dead do haunt us—everywhere, as lamps
That gazing welds to the revolving eye.

In streets where living they would not have been,
Nor we have looked for them, we saw them pass,
Pause on the island as the light went green,
Swing round the enormous rectangle of glass.

Hair, patterned scarf, smile, hand with cigarette,
In twinkling instant built them whole again.
Our dreams like trumpets raised them, never deep.

Those who alive came rarely in our sleep
Now down the mirror glades each night are met,
Minutely clear as lovers loved in vain.

N. K. Cruickshank.

DESERT DEPARTURE

BITTER frost.
Yonder,
Faint dawning—
Lone silence
Thralling,
And Arabs,
Their dark tents
Falling.

Camp fires
Glowing,
Sinking, blazing
'gainst the background
Of the night—
Dawn-wind
Blowing.

Silhouetted
'Gainst the Heavens,
Camels
Kneeling,
Lading ;
Bedouin
O'er the dark loads
Bending,
Ice from the water skins
Carefully shaking ;—
Else crouched,
Momentarily,
Beside the hearth,
For warmth,
'Ere mounting.

" Yallah !
Yallah !
O my children
Going ! "
So the sheikh—
(Ringing
His cry.)—
The signal
For parting.

Shuffle of movement,
A calling,
And hasting,
Then forth
Across the desert dim,
The wilderness
Rolling,
The Sheikh
On his pale dulal

Leading,—
As shades
The nomads
Are moving.—

Ahead,
The dark sky reddens,—
Fades ;
The horned moon
Waning,
And sudden
O'er the world's rim,
The great sun
Uprushing,
Day begins,
The pageant primeval
Perfecting,
The desert
Revealing,—
Boulders and hillocks
Unending,
Waste,
Upon waterless waste
Unveiling,
Sand-ridden stretches
Advancing, receding,
A challenge to Heaven
Of stubborn resistance,
(Ne'er blossoming more,)
With relentless persistence
Rejecting
The sun's fierce lore.

So the Bedouin
Journeying on,
Passed virgin morn,
And lusty noon,—
Till, specks in the distance,—
(The vultures can see them)—
Twilight conceals them,
The pinions of evening ;
The billows of Darkness ;—
The spirit of silence—
Chanting their anthem.

Capri, May 30th, 1937.

VIOLET RAWNSLEY.

IN THE BENTS

DARK grey the sea and sullen-dark the sky,
And a wind that drifts moaning in the dunes like sorrow ;
The pale bents are silver
And grey, like rain.

The peewits rise about, beating and crying,
Swooping on the wind, savage in distress, and frenzied,
Loud wings sawing the wind ;
Crying and crying.

Hushed they stand on the grass—watching ; vain now their wild crying.
I have come where they crouch at my feet, the cherished three,
Tiny balls of speckled fluff
. . . . In the open nest.

So is the grief-stricken heart mute,
And still,
And cold,
Like a stone.

DOROTHY MARGARET PAULIN.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : LXIX

Edna St. Vincent Millay has given in her new volume *Conversation at Midnight* (Harper and Bros.) to her hosts of readers a most entertaining and provocative conversational book. During the course of the talk of these nine persons, which includes a butler and a chauffeur almost every topic is met in one way and another. This book is colloquial and modern to the point of being in the language of to-day, but queries and solutions are touched upon as profound as any that have confounded the ages. Herein we find a stock-broker, a painter, a writer of short stories, a poet who is a communist, a Roman Catholic Priest, the host at whose house the conversation takes place, and a young man in the advertising business. These personages are clearly drawn in prose pictures in the preface of the volume. Of course, the talk is held, as the title says, at midnight with scotch and soda to help it along. In this welter of opinions it is not easy to fairly quote. I am, however, turning to comments of John, the painter, for no better reason than that they have distinct appeal :

> It is not arrogance, Ricardo, it is utter
> Terror and loneliness
> That drives a man to address the Void as " Thou."
> Man cannot breathe in an atmosphere that neither pities nor condemns.
> This Life, this All-I-Have, my treasure,
> Is it indeed in a dark unfathomed cave that it sends forth its purest ray serene?—
> No ray, then, nullified by darkness, never seen?
> It is against the nature of a man, it is against his deepest instinct to accept
> That his articulate mouth in anguish to the earless Inconceivable speaks on and on,
> That his tremendous, his important struggle to be kind, to be wise,
> Is witnessed by no eyes,
> And if he broke, or kept
> With fortitude his proud and arduous vow
> Not only does not matter here and now
> But never mattered, nor ever will, and so he lives and dies.
> And is not even *gone*
> From where he never was, though there he lies.
>
> Has not the elaborate cunning of this torture over and over stated
> That though he is not loved, though he will never rise
> Out of the grave, he has at least been hated?

Again quoting, this time Anselmo, the Priest says :

> Faith does not require the existence of an added sense above man's normal five,
> Nor of a specific and distinct new faculty evolved

To cope with an existing spiritual environment of which one is suddenly aware;
We cannot *contrive*
To believe. Yet by an act of Reason the questioning mind,
Unlighted save by Reason, reviewing its own darkness and considering if light be desirable, suddenly may find
Light shed upon all, the world where he stumbled lighted, and the path before him lighted;
And the shadowy looming bulks of terror and despair
Chastened each into its proper outline and dimension, and resolved
Into a trick of shadows, something only in the darkness there.
Now are all things clearly; now is the unclouded eye
Perceptive, now is the whole intelligence a thousand-fold enhanced,
Enabled thus to witness, and to receive;
Now does the sharpened ear
Unstraining, hark and hear.
The Divine Gift, which empowers a man to believe,
Is marvellous and simple, like a gift of light. . . .
Not to the sightless, but to men with eyes, who wander groping in the night.

And, so, one might continue to quote from these pages of interesting and intriguing observations. All of the observations are not as hopeful as those quoted, many are quite the contrary.

Miss Sherman has been widely appreciated as an essayist. Her volume entitled *On the Manuscripts of God* received marked approval from such discriminating critics as those of *The National*, *Boston Transcript*, etc. In her volume of *Poems* (Mitre Press), gathered from publications that have appeared in *Scribner's*, *The Nation*, the *Boston Transcript*, etc., Miss Sherman gives us poems that bespeak the ardour of her spirit and the gift of her expression. She has divided the volume in war poems, religious poems, nature poems, water poems and translations.

Miss Sherman opens her volume with a tribute to England, ending with:

A loving cup we lift,
   Though Death may drug its ruddy wine:
We drink to thee across the sea,
   Across the darkest clouds that drift
Above our land and thine.

For thee our prayers ascend
   By morning beam and twilight star;
Our Mother thou by blood and vow,
   Our Mother thou to shield and fend
With all we have and are!

From the end of the volume, we choose " Weavers " to illustrate Miss Sherman's gift :

> I have watched a weaver at his loom
> Inweave his dream with a silken thread,
> Endowing a rose with longer life
> That knows its kin in the garden-bred,
> And again I have watched two friends who plied
> The shuttles fine that weave with words—
> On the magical loom of human speech,
> A fabric as rich as the song of birds ;
> From all the world perchance the stock
> That gave them the neutral warp they spun ;
> From heart and brain came the rainbow-woof—
> As weaves his golden threads the sun—
> Over and under the cloud-spun gray,
> On the loom whose shimmering web is day.

A first volume of verse from Charlotte Louise Groom, *The Street of Women* (Dorrance and Co.), gives evidence of talent and versatility. Her work is musical and colourful. A sonnet sequence attracts the reader. From it we give the following :

> Be humble, oh my heart, as are the hills
> That stoop so low to kiss the shallow earth ;
> Be strong as they and quiet. He who fills
> The waters' level shall He portion dearth
> To you ? Be silent then, and with the trees
> Give ear, uplifted, to the swinging spheres
> And keep yourself in unison with these
> Who have obeyed Him through unnumbered years.
>
> Strife hath no place in Order, only Change ;
> Change all too vast for you to comprehend,
> Who only know it was, it is, shall be,
> Unto perfection. Since you can arrange
> Not only pale star in space nor tempest bend,
> Why then, oh heart, perversity in thee?

" Doubt " is a song—

> Sun on the floor and a wind outside,
> What are they more than wind and sun ;
> Why do they make the small thoughts run
> Strange as a cloud on the damp hillside ?
>
> Strange as if dawn and the twilight dun
> Somehow were threaded both together,
> Sun in the sky and windy weather,
> What have these ended and what begun ?

All that is living since Spring was made
What is it more than wind and sun?
Nothing is finished, less begun.
Wind and sunlight and words that fade.

Miss Groom writes us that she turns " to poetry as a means of personal outlet. Then too, once in a while the poetry just writes itself and the savour of that experience and the expectation of it is enough alone. I can remember as a small child I puzzled a teacher no end when she questioned me about a certain poem by telling her no one had helped me but I didn't write it myself. I am not sure I can give a better answer now. I have been writing since I was ten years old and I have found that an idea simply takes root and grows until it makes my mind so uncomfortable that I cannot live with it another hour.

" As for why I feel poetry should be written—is not the soul of a race in its poetry? Is not poetic expression the closest we come to the eternal vision of perfection? Prose is held in some sort always to current fact but for poetry the idea is free and timeless. Hence, a great poet is a power, for unconsciously a people take flame from the burning volcano of his vision. Only at times this power and its fullness are withdrawn until a generation is born whose urgent necessity makes it large enough in understanding to receive a fresh showering of Prometheus' fire.

" Our day is certainly one of strife when we need the clear eye of poetry as a light and a star over the path of materialism. We live in a jewelled, glittering, excited time full of fascination and the delicious temptation of ' getting and spending' . I have hoped to show in my small volume that life built on a grab bag formula is not the only means of strength and full living."

Those who have read the two previous volumes from Thomas Sweeney—*Horizon Frames* and *Sunward*—reach for his *Legend of Leonardo* (G. P. Putnam Sons) with interested expectation. Thomas Sweeney, who lives richly in the life to to-day—business life, patriotic and social—turns back the pages of history in this new work of his and writes of Leonardo da Vinci. As he tells you in the Foreword "The long twilight of the Middle Ages was casting its final glimmer, and the rising sun of science was spreading its first feeble rays."

This Legend of Mr. Sweeney's is a literary, historic and romantic achievement, turning us away from modern life and the problems of to-day—in three acts and sixteen scenes, with a Prologue.

From Mr. Sweeney's colourful pages, the character of Leonardo stands forth vividly, through his own comments. The driving power of his belief in art, we find in the following lines :

BOTTICELLI :

Perhaps you think that love should be effaced!

Leonardo:

Not that! But inspiration should be placed
Upon a higher plane—above the whim
Of changing human moods. The synonym
For that decree of love of which I preach,
Is ecstasy—which are alone can reach.

And again in the following lines:

To reproduce one's soul in bronze or paint,
And breathe the breath of life in clay or wood—
Divorced from love's demands and sacrifice—
To make a cloud of dust a kneeling saint,
And picture love and hate and brotherhood—
Yes, that is man's approach to paradise!

In the following quotation we find the philosophy of Leonardo:

I aim to prove that every man is free
To steer his course and carve his destiny!
Like eagles men will rise and spread their wings,

And laugh at shackles which had held them down.
Triumphant, science will attain its crown,
And vagrant clouds will mark our journeyings.
Then space will crumble, time will be subdued,
Panoramas broadened till the west
Becomes the east. From nature men will wrest
Her secrets, holding force in servitude.

The blind will know the sun; the deaf, the bees;
The span of life, a chain of polished gems
For those who understand the mysteries
And seek the truth in roots and not on stems!
The ship of progress courses toward the day
When man is captain, not a stowaway.

Continuing this claim for art, Leonardo asserts:

All art is sacred and divine if true.
In all of heaven's catalogue no sins
Are half so great as ravaging the art
Which breathes a soul in lifeless manikins.
And yet, like fools, from ancient times to this
When freedom rings its bell or battles sound,
We celebrate by burning priceless gems
And crushing beauty's form wherever found.

Under the spell of the immortal Mona Lisa, at the close of the poem Leonardo proclaims tenderly to her:

You ask for nothing, yet would give me all!
To prove your loyalty, you'd pay death's toll!

I see the truth at last! Ambition's wall
Had dulled my reasoning and warped my soul!
To triumph, intellect must own defeat!
Till love is master, life is not complete.

Many distinguished personages are presented in this Legend. We find Savonarola, who in fiery lines denounces Leonardo; Lorenzo da Medici is here, Louis XII, King of France, Machaibelli, Lucrezia Borgia, and the Divine Mona Lisa. In Mr. Sweeney's Foreword he tells us: "Although written in drama form, the Legend of Leonardo is meant for the library rather than the stage—the hope being to make the actors live as modern men and women, by having them talk the language of to-day and yet remain in the Italian renaissance. Leonardo moves among them as a philosopher, aloof and yet yearning for that sympathetic touch which his strange nature made it impossible for him to enjoy." We welcome the treatment of a glowing historic personality like Leonardo, which brings to mind just here an apt quotation:

"A cultivated reader of history is domesticated in all families; he dines with Pericles and sups with Titian."

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

A RHYME TO "MONTH"

Time and Eternity

[At a recent meeting of The Poetry Society, Mr. Langford Reed, V.P., author of the latest and best *Rhyming Dictionary*, challenged his fellow-members to produce a rhyme to "month," lisping, of course, barred.]

By second, minute, hour, day, week and month,
And year Time counts; but, in Eternity,
The out-burning of each thousand-millionth
Star-cluster will the mark and measure be.

EDWARD VANDERMERE FLEMING.

[Young verse-writers may note that the lines grew out of the rhyme.—ED.]

POETS ON POETRY

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—The many admirable and illuminating personal statements on poetry that have been a feature of Mrs. Hunt Bartlett's Dynamic pages should be collated and published in booklet form, and I would also suggest the collection of the many arresting lines, if not entire poems, that appear in each issue of THE POETRY REVIEW and mitigate the complaint that there is neither beauty nor music, depth nor significance nor memorable lines in modern poetry.

Washington, Yours, etc.,
Co. Durham. W. J. ROUTLEDGE.

NEW CLASSICAL TRANSLATIONS

EZRA POUND expresses somewhere the opinion that it is a good thing for a poet during the long intervals which occur between periods of inspiration, to busy himself with translations of other poets into verse, so as to keep the machinery oiled and ready to deal with the times of divine afflatus when they occur. To judge from the spate of translations which our presses have been pouring forth recently, there should be an abundance of well-oiled minds. One may perhaps also assume that the tide of inspiration has been recently at a low ebb. I have no less than four such translations before me for consideration at the present moment, four dramas of Euripedes by Hugh Owen Meredith, M.A. (Allen and Unwin 7s. 6d.); Lucretius, "De Rerum Natura" by R. C. Trevelyan (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d.); "The Odes of Horace," by A. S. Way, D.Lit. (Macmillan, 2s. 6d.); "Catullus and Tibullus," by A. S. Way, D.Lit. (Macmillan, 2s. 6d.).

It is firstly an amazing thing that in the present financial eclipse of poetry, when getting new verse on the market is a truly Sisyphean task, publishers can be found ready to attempt to market expensive verse translations of this description. Where do they hope to find their audience? One would have expected that the common reader, to whom poetry is supposed to make little or no appeal, would be less attracted than ever by second-hand versions of the classics; and that the uncommon reader—the cultured and learned one—would prefer to read these poets in their own tongue.

That having been said, it remains to consider these particular translations; and to say that time and space alike are quite insufficient to deal adequately with any of them. For justly to estimate the value of a translation as such it would be necessary to make a careful and thorough examination of the original and its duplicate side by side. And where is the reviewer who has time and patience for that?

The Euripedes plays have been put into a vigorous modern sort of idiom which makes a refreshing change, and look as though they would play well in this new guise. They read tediously—but so do many plays that are excellent on the stage. The author prefaces each play with a set of introductory notes on the characters; these notes are admirable, and should be of great assistance to such amateur dramatic societies as might wish to experiment with a Greek play—an experiment well worth consideration.

The whole of "De Rerum Natura," was a gigantic task, and Mr. Trevelyan has rendered it still more difficult by carrying it through in English decasyllabic blank verse. Milton could perhaps sustain a flight of 250 pages in blank verse without breaking his wings together with his reader's patience; but Mr. Trevelyan, though a competent and a delightful poet on a smaller scale, is not Milton. I think the heroic couplet (admirably suited for a didactic work such as this) would have been a wiser choice—*pace* the author, who stigmatizes the classical translations in this form by Pope and Dryden as "intolerable travesties." They are at least readable poems; which this is not.

One day we shall have a battle of translators, in which those who believe in being close to the original, and those who believe in writing poetry will take opposite sides—for these two desiderata can be but rarely combined, and then only by most unusual good fortune. In a poem I believe writing poetry to be the essential, leaving transliteration to its natural vehicle, prose. This does not mean that the original must be travestied; but that a true poem must be written which, as far as possible, shall reproduce in an English mind the emotions, the thought and the poetic atmosphere which the original produced in the mind of its reader.

The two methods are well exemplified in the two books by Dr. Way. Horace has been translated into literal line-by-line prose, and the result is admirable of its kind, and serves a useful function for those who require speedy assistance with the original. I doubt if anyone else will read it, for it has little or no intrinsic beauty.

Catullus and Tibullus have been turned into English poems, and must be judged in accordance with their success in catching the spirit of the originals. This naturally varies with different poems, especially in Catullus, but rarely as far as I can judge reaches a high degree of excellence. The author succeeds more in the satirical poems, less in those poems of deep and tormented passion where Catullus is at his best. The translation of XLII for instance (Adeste, hendecasyllabi, quot estis) seems to me to be wholly admirable. An instance on the other side of complete poetic failure is the version of the lovely No. V, which in the original has 45 words, and in Dr. Way's translation, 124. Even allowing for the greater compression of an inflectional language like Latin, this is far too many. It could certainly be done in 90. The result is that the English translation which begins

> "Let us live in the only true style,
> That is, Lesbia, love all the while,"

has a sort of bustling, back-slapping quality, very far removed from the dark atmosphere of its lovely original, in which the energy is potential rather than kinetic, a passion grave and sombre, gathered slowly and sustained remorselessly to the point of exaltation. There is something in this poem of Catullus that is like the roll of drums in Africa; but the translator gives us rather the roll of taxis in Piccadilly.

Take the common life of man and make poetry from that—a recipe for poetry, not infallible but valuable, much advertised to-day, no novel idea. Hedley Lucas in *See You a City* (Sherratt and Hughes, 3s. 6d.) has worked at this vein and gone not entirely unrewarded with gold. We must believe that the city is one where they spin threads and weave cloth, for the imagery of the loom overshadows most of these delicate pastels, where the colours seem not brushed on but woven in with tenuous and subtle threads; and from this predominant cast of thought lovely and startling images at times arise.

                    . . . . light
Air-spun like glass. . . .

that, in " New Mill," so clearly shows the hard yet delicate shaft of modern lighting. And again:

. . . those gentle whirling gossamers,
The fantasies of sleep,

a swift and truly poetic transference of thought from the vertigo of the silent spinning bobbins to the deeper hypnosis of sleep. The extraordinary persistence of this image-motif is shown in one of the most interesting of the poems, " Business House Visitors " :

Here I would strip the composite
Of those who, shuttled to and fro
In this design of come and go,
Weave their thin-textured shade and light
Within this city room :
Such threads as are untwined
In zestful factory of mind,
Then throbbed across life's loom.

But ah ! too soon, too late :
This patterned mask of dye
And twisted strand moves by,
A web for ever indeterminate.

This poem reveals at once its author's strength and his weakness : he handles the imagery of words with strength and decision; but the words themselves, particularly in their sounds, their stresses, their ability to form rhythmic patterns of delight and conjure beauty; which are the soul of poetry, as imagery is its brain—with these he is not so happy. And I find in this book much beauty of colour, some beauty of form, but little music.

I suppose it is rare to find every beauty, though poetry demands them all and will not be satisfied with less. Several at least of these poems are gems of bright fire, and of these one of the most lustrous is " Journey's End " :

Tired day jog-trots to driving sun,
And sinking light sparks its last fires.
Ah ! Patience, now I see you in this horse
That still lifts hooves that gleam above
The fettering ground ; see you in eyes
That crystal-gaze as deep as peace.
Ah ! Trust, that turns upon the day's
Last rim of toil, you soon shall know
Requite amid the stabling night.

This is the true fire that in its flaming corona fuses and makes vaporous the poet's thought.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

Mr. George Rostrevor Hamilton, in a new book coming from the Cambridge University Press entitled *Poetry and Contemplation: a Preface to Poetics*, disputes the findings of recent literary critics, and particularly those of Dr. I. A. Richards, whose attitude is (he says) that "the essential function of the arts is to incease the activity and promote the health of the nervous system." Mr. Hamilton argues that the experience of poetry is itself its own value, a contemplative (and not a subconscious) experience, capable of giving full imaginative satisfaction. "It seems oddly perverse," he writes, "to be able to enjoy poetry, and yet to look for its value outside the enjoyment." This book may prove to be a turning point in the history of criticism, and in the practice of poetry. Mr. Hamilton is a poet, and is able to give an insight into the motives and forces that are at work at the time of composition.

Perhaps we expect too much from the poet as novelist, but we cannot think that the reputation gained by C. Day Lewis as a modernist poet is enhanced by his latest excursion into fiction, *Starting Point* (Cape, 7s. 6d.). It has not even the comparative originality of *The Friendly Tree*, in which the sensual scene was somewhat sublimated. Young men and women at Oxford are presented, almost to the point of satire as revelling in cheap and flippant platitudes; they are all of a pink complexion derived more nearly from "The Pink 'Un" than from their politics, and if they are types they are unequally all unpleasant; even their politics are uncertain and unsatisfactory, inclining the verse writer to "suppose I must reconcile myself to the mechanized brigade of Pegasus, and Parnassus levelled to make a dirt-track for the proletariat." Realism is introduced by frequent references to a part of the anatomy not generally mentioned but for which Mr. Cecil Day Lewis finds at least three synonyms. Perhaps the most satisfactory episode is the intrusion of a double tragedy, and that is really unintentional.

Mr. S. W. Powell has at least a straightforward story to tell, yet while plot, characterisation, vivid colouring are admirable he has given himself little time for adequate development, and his new novel of South Sea life, which he apparently knows so well, is too short and too much like a film synopsis, disappointing after his more cleverly wrought and penetrative previous novels. Mr. Powell has great gifts of analysis as well as imagination and knowledge of human action and character, out of which should come a really great novel.

Mr. Langford Reed has produced another Limerick Book, this time providing Limericks based on boys' and girls' names, neatly, whimsically adroitly turned. (Nelson, 2s. 6d.).

THE UNCRITICAL POET

DRYDEN, who is unrivalled for courteous rudeness to his contemporaries—Pope, though ruder, seldom troubled to be courteous—once remarked of a fellow-poet :

> The rest to some fair meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

We may feel sure that, if Shadwell had *any* feeling for literary proportion, this criticism did him a power of good, and we may also feel sure that the dearth of these honest, if rather rudimentary, methods is a matter of regret. Apart from periodical exchanges of pleasantries between Mr. Ezra Pound and various of his American critics, a stifling veneer of good but quite pointless breeding pervades literary circles to-day. It is surely unnatural to lay a charge of over-restraint at the door of the critics, so it seems that we must bring it against authors and, as that is our particular business, poets.

The mere fact that during the last year at least one hundred and fifty books of new poetry must have been published in England alone, and that there is no prospect of either an abatement in quantity or an improvement in quality during the next twelve months, is surely sufficient indication of the need of more honest criticism than our present humanitarian standards allow. Now criticism, like another excellent quality, begins at home : the poet has got to criticize himself ; if he does not trouble to, no one else will. Also, the most vital criticism does not come after a poem is written but before. I have just said that a poet has to criticize himself—not just his poetry ; and in order to mollify those many rhymesters who will doubtless explode into sonnet-sequences of indignation at the suggestion of self-criticism, I will add the old adage that criticism should not imply a finding of fault but a setting of hitherto unrelated facts into their correct perspective. If a poet submits himself unsparingly and unflinchingly to such criticism, he will, if he *be* a poet, find himself suddenly realizing what of his work is important and what is not and, above all, why. The inverse of this is, of course, that if he be not a poet and has any self-respect, he will stop writing, which is all to the good.

Before me now are the works of five modern writers, one of whom is a first-class poet, and the other four very nearly so. It is true of at any rate three of these four that their failure to graduate (in my opinion at any rate) to the first class is due to that lack of discipline of thoughts that is rife among writers to-day. They are all facile writers, showing evidence of real lyrical genius, and if they fail to cast a classical correctness over their work the reason can only be that in this age of shifting cosmopolitan uncertainty they have been unable to set themselves unhesitatingly before a solid background—unable to obtain a consistent characteristic point of view.

In *The Dark Flower* (Selwyn & Blount, 3s. 6d), Maimie A. Richardson, although she writes much more strongly and assuredly than in her earlier volumes, is yet too emotional to be entirely consistent, and as emotionalism in itself is not particularly individual, many of her poems lack a character which her poetic sensitiveness and technical ability would otherwise give them. Thus she ends an otherwise beautiful poem with " Ah ! never more, Beloved ! ah, never any more ! " and we are none the wiser, nor can we connect it in thought or spirit with the rest of the poem. When she refers to the moon as " warm " we can at least respect this almost Sitwellian standpoint, but we begin to be doubtful when, having described autumn as " a tawny wench, not over-ripe for mating," she later calls her " sated and weary, half-sullen in her pride." There are many such contradictions in Mrs. Richardson's work, but it always contains plenty of interest and much of beauty.

Allen Tate's *Reactionary Essays* were so moderate and mature that I had expected his poems to possess similar qualities, particularly so exclusive an assortment as his *Selected Poems* (Scribner, 7s. 6d.). In this I was disappointed : they have other, and outstanding, qualities, but that quiet self-possession which one would expect of a discerning critic is not conspicuous among them.

What years of the other times, what centuries
Broken, divided up and claimed ? A few
Here and there to the taste, in vigilance
Ceaseless, but now a little stale, to keep us
Fearless, not worried as the hare scurrying
Without memory. . . .

gives the impression that the author has something important to say, but is not quite sure what. He admits in his preface to having made considerable revisions of the poems, although in the end they still lack some of the lustre which his labour deserves. He speaks a little obviously of " wet mire," but would never have done so had he had a clear picture of it in his mind before he started to write. The " Horatian Epode to the Duchess of Malfi," is an excellent piece which is not thoroughly characteristic of him. " Fragments of a Meditation " is more typical of his style ; but his most important work is the " Ode to the Confederate Dead." If he could always maintain that standard, he would soon be a great figure in contemporary letters.

Robin Hyde is the third of my present trilogy of almost-first-rate poets, and her work seems the most enjoyable. She is already an experienced writer, and her new book *Persephone in Winter* (Hurst and Blackett, 3s. 6d.) provides a collection of her poetry which displays her talent and her versatility. Her poems are full of her own personality, yet they are not personal in the egotistical sense. " Defeat " is an example of this. It begins :

But that was no defeat. Defeat, my friend,
Is a simple thing, and past your understanding.
Defeat is no cry in the night, no sudden banding
Together of men beleagured, no comrade glance at the end. . .

> These are bold colours. Defeat is woven in gray . . .
> Defeat is a little smile, a turning away.

When she is impersonal, her technique somehow suffers, as in "Farewell to Stars":

> Arcturus, Orion and Neptune,
> Lingering crystal flames,
> Stars with the lovely names
> Say, will the end be soon?

but her usual command of words is shown in the title poem:

> Only the stealthy lute-string sound
> Of hesitant waters underground,
> Only the ice-blue water-drips
> Are secret as her lips.

"In a Silent House," and "They Consider the Crucifixion" are fine poems, and if any of the smaller poems tend to triviality, this is more than atoned for by the beauty of the *Envoi*, the last note being, as musicians frequently say, the most important.

Alcazar (Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1s.) by Egerton Clarke cannot be put into any such category. The author has a very definite standpoint, a creed and an ideal, which occasionally hinder but more often help his artistic achievement. "Cistercians in the Mangold Field" particularly stands out. The clear, frosty images flow out with the remorseless but delicate insistence of steel turnings, in their shining purity, from a lathe. There is also a short poem on Alice Meynell, incisive, sympathetic, beginning:

> Her thoughts, an active Order, moved
> About the streets with quiet look;
> Black-habited in print they prayed
> Within the cloisters of her book.

And the poet in my first-class category? He is Edwin Muir. First let it be said that my cataloguing is entirely arbitrary, there being no concrete definition of what is a "first class poet," let alone who is. Different poets will, of course, be accepted and rejected by different people and by changing generations; my classification only applies to the sheer ability, or inability, to write, and it is this distinction which, "poetic inspiration" apart, differentiates the craftsman from the amateur. Edwin Muir is a craftsman. Three years ago the publication of *Variations on a Time Theme* showed us that, besides being a critic whom we could trust, Mr. Muir was a poet we could admire, for his passionate but finely controlled sequence of poems shone as something unusually vital at a time of somewhat insipid production. His new volume, *Journeys and Places* (Dent, 2s. 6d.) is less virile but more polished and contemplative, more satisfying. The few unnatural images which jarred in the earlier book have been replaced by a strength of metaphor which is at the same time simple and profound. The spiritual depth which he has gained since the previous book by living again in his homeland—the Orkneys—is still controlled by his intellectualism which supplies that corrective on which I have already insisted as part of a poet's make-up. Such passages as this are the result:

The days have closed behind my back
Since I came into these hills.
Now memory is a single field
One peasant tills and tills.

His old element of bleakness is increased in "The Mythical Journey" for obvious reasons:

First in the North. The black sea-tangle beaches,
Brine-bitter stillness, tablet strewn morass,
Tall women against the sky with heads covered,
The witch's house below the black-toothed mountain,
Wave-echo in the roofless chapel,
The twice-dead castle on the swamp-green mound,
Darkness at noon-day, wheel of fire at midnight,
The level sun and the wild shooting shadows.

Equally successful although quite different is:

Did I see there the dragon brood
By streams their emerald scales unfold,
While from their amber eyballs fell
Soft-rayed the rustling gold?

Such versatility in descriptions is remarkable in a writer whose *forte* is the psychological rather than the pictorial poem. It is the skill with which he infuses moods, almost personalities, into his scenes which make them live—the skill which is the mainspring of romantic poetry. JOHN H. ELLIOT.

THE AUTUMN'S GLEANING.

Autumn is the busiest season for books, and many members are among those who have published small volumes of verse this year. Not all are first volumes, either. Three books are published by Combridge's of Hove in their shilling series. In *Autumn Leaves* Enid Carter is mostly concerned with country things and the peace that pervades them; she includes several poems written during the War and reiterates her belief that:

Could we but bring this all-pervading peace,
Born of the trinity of sea and sky and fresh-turned soil,
To those who never felt its balm distil release
From jaded cares and fretting thoughts of wars and rivalries,
Would there be wiser heads and hearts, grown sane to know
That man to-day needs more of Beauty—and only where she lies
In Nature's arms will he recover his lost equipoise,
Win that serenity transmutes for him the daily changes
In her pageantry to golden joys?
For he will find contentment's glow

Enrich the evenings of his daily work, who will not let the city's
strife
And clamour—all its swift machinery and robot-ways—
Stifle his love of her, nor lead his life
Divorced from Nature and the sweet succession of her days.

The *Downland Echoes* of C. Elvey Cope are mostly of Sussex. He is at his best when using his lilting measures in a ballad and where his fancies deepen to real imagination, as in "The River of Souls" which embodies an old Sussex legend :

The Sage. . . .
The sound of its waves as they sob and sigh
Is the song of the people who under them lie.
Doomed to repose on a ghastly bed
With never a pillow beneath their head,
The weak and the mad,
The sinful, the sad,
Together beneath the swift waters lie,
And gaze with a dull unseeing eye,
Filmed and choked with the slimy mud;
Yet striving to pierce the yellow flood,
Up from the desolate depths of the river,
Up from the weed-tangled depths of the river.

Sussex again is a background to the records of her own experiences and thoughts in Edith S. Beves' *A Medley of Verse*. She concludes her book with some charming children's verses, of which "Child Rhymeling" is particularly pleasing :

If I were you and you were me
What fun we'd have at play,
We would not be ourselves again
Until the close of day.

Oh ! I would ride your pony then
And you would have to walk !
But then my parrot would be yours,
He's funny and can talk !

All day we'd both of us pretend
That we were one another ;
But nights we'd have to change, 'cos then
We'd want our ownest Mother !

The firm smooth writing of Margaret Stewart in *Songs and Sonnets* (Poetry of To-day, 2s. 6d.) carries a weight of quiet conviction. The effect of the poems is summed up in her own words to another "Singer" :

And though she breathed no high resolve,
  And hymned no deathless hate,

Nor sought the mystery to solve
Of human life and fate,

In verses as melodious
As murmuring of doves,
She left a record dear to us
Of her most quiet loves.

Albert E. Dewey shows many admirable qualities in his *Varied Verses*. His poems are incisive, rich in philosophy and humour, and have that frequent turn of unexpectedness at the critical moment of climax. " Woman " demonstrates some of these qualities :

Blame is not hers, but that unstable mind
Whose " will not " latent bears within " I will,"
And whose " for ever " holds, implied, " until,"
Like gifts by terms conditional assigned.
With each affirmative, there lurks behind
A shadow of negation, that may kill
The unsuspecting joy, or may instill
Refusal with high hopes yet undefined.

I dare not blame her ; she is Time's fair daughter,
Who, as he writes, the written word effaces.
Despoiling what his flowing thought replaces
Inconstant he, and mutable as water.

Blame is not hers ; she is but as her sire,
At once iconoclast and beautifier.

The poems in Jessie B. Heard's *With the Seasons* are grouped into the four quarters of the year. They are simple lyrics whose music is dependent on the artifice of archaic diction, which seems to suit her pretty fancies.

Taking the old Chinese aphorism which says that poetry is perfumed wisdom, Cyril Upton calls his book of poems *The Perfumed Pen* (Duckworth, 5s.). The fluent, often rather diffuse, poems are written from many places, though China is written *of* and not *from* that country. " Over Two Thousand Weary Years," however, is an excellent musing on Lao Tze and his disciple Chuang Tzu, and ends with a delightful episode concerning a moth :

And as I watch the folly of thy flight,
Thy helpless tragic dance of death proceed,
I know the learned Lao Tze was right,
And Will Power is a sorry myth indeed.

We have a little? Let us use it then,
As counselled by this wise and kindly man,
To save from suffering, not only men,
But every living creature that we can.

So, little moth, I cannot see thee die;
Go, live thy fleeting hour in joyous flight,
Thou who hast come as much from God as I;
I close my book, and so—blow out the light.

But know, you owe your freedom to a page
Writ in the purple mountains of Ling Po,
In bounteous wisdom by a Chinese sage,
Over two thousand weary years ago.

The most attractive poem in Guinevere Grove Crofts' attractive volume, *I Dare Not Venture* has also a Chinese flavour. It is addressed to a Pekinese, reminding him of the ordering of the Great Empress:

Let the Lion dog be small and wearing
Dignity's cape round his neck,
With a brow of a royal boxer
Specked with a snow-white fleck.

His ears as the sails of a war-junk
With the nose of a Monkey god,
Let his body be shaped as a lion
To walk where no devil has trod.

Let his feet be hairy and tufted
That his footfalls may silent be,
His forelegs bent as the willows
No inquisitive wanderer he.

Let his coat be a golden sable
To be worn in a yellow robe,
Or striped as the snarling dragon
That guards the Heavenly globe. . . .

It is true she does not venture "into the woods at night" or into very deep waters of experience, but she can write of French scenes with grace and piquancy, and of the barges plying on the Seine in particular:

The bargees sit and smoke their pipes
   And play belote for fun,
The women wash their coloured clothes
   And dry them in the sun. . . .

When Christmas comes and snow falls deep
Upon their pointed prow,
They place the sacred mistletoe
The ancient golden Bough.

The charming illustrations are by Mariette Lyddis.

Tetsuzo Okada, who is a member of The Poetry Society, has published his translations of *Chinese and Sino-Japanese Poems* in Tokio. He has gone further afield for material than many other translators, is thoroughly at home with our language and has printed the original text alongside the new. Their symmetry of design is a revelation in the printed line of verse.

Last Flowers, a translation from Moschus and Bion (Harvard U.P. $2.00) proves the translator, Henry Harman Chamberlin, to be both scholar and poet. Not only does he give a good version of these poets but he tells us in his generous notes of other translations and where the themes have been re-used. Of particular interest are the " Dirge for Adonis," and the " Elegy on the Death of Bion," which were fused and transmuted by Shelley into " Adonais." Mr. Chamberlin has already translated the chief of the " bucolic poets," Theocritus, in an earlier volume.

Two pamphlets, *Glengarriff* by W. H. MacMahon, and *Lances in the Sun* by Bettina Fenwick Owen, may be mentioned here. Mr. MacMahon has worked the sound of some pleasing place-names into his little eulogy; Miss Owen is happiest in her Buddha poem. There is personal experience and sincerity in *White Birds and Other Poems* (Stockwell, 2s. 6d.) by Mabel Evans Clarke, though her language is somewhat sentimentalized and her jog-trot metres stumble at times. Religious thought and domestic themes inform most of the *Poems* by David Henry Kyes (Torch Press, Iowa). Their homely and admirable sentiments are expressed in easy rhymes and forms, their author deliberately seeking to " make the hidden explicit, the marvellous simple, and to restore and vivify some of the more exalted harmonies of life." Similar are the subjects and their treatment in *The Circle of Life*, by Dr. G. H. Waugh (Geo. Over, Rugby).

Ethel Ireson records her love of country things and her religious sentiments in *Down a Devonshire Lane* (Heath Cranton, 2s. 6d.) with easily written lyrics. In most of them she is content to be merely descriptive ; it is in the poem written on the words of Joyce Kilmer, " But Only God Can Make a Tree," that she strikes an arresting note of significance :

I wonder if God made the trees
Of all His Works most wonderful,
Because His Son one day should lie
Taut on the Tree ; most blessed Wood
That held His Sacred Body there :

Should I not thank my God that He
Has made that lovely thing—a tree.

To write in more than one dialect is an accomplishment. R. H. Stevens can handle Devonshire and Scotch tales in verse with equal ease, nor does he fail when he attempts classical invocations in traditional style. There are general poems as well in this volume of *Poems* (The Fir Tree, Nether Stowey).

Noel Holmes and Erica Fay are well sponsored, the one by an introduction from Frank Kendon to *A Cambridge Sky* (C.U.P., 2s. 6d.), and the other by a few words from Sir Arthur Quiller Couch commending her *Kings and Heroes* (Eclipse Press, 2s. 6d.). Her narrative poems tell of favourite episodes in early English history with the refreshing speed and jauntiness that tetrameter lines can give. The pace is good enough to carry off some clumsinesses that would trouble more sedate verse. This is Henry I in " The First Zoo " :

Soft sentient leopards licked his hands,
His fiercest lions breathed
Softly, to show they understood
Why smiles no longer wreathed
Their lonely master's kingly face,
Too often from them hid.
No human eye then saw him smile ;
Perhaps his lions did.

Mr. Kendon implies that Mr. Holmes has the potential qualities of a real poet, that he " has done one part of the poet's duty—to read—and is doing, but has not yet finished, the other part—to write." He has depth and richness of thought, a well filled mind and a sensitive perception. They are not yet completely harmonized, illustrations, excellent in themselves, do not always exactly clinch the argument. But he can write thus beautifully in " Riches of Earth " :

When the calm blue of ocean gravely turned
With longing hands and bared its sudden breast,
There was a fire that inland redly burned,
A crimson that was earthly, and sure rest

From too tremendous beauty of sea and sky,
God in each grain, in every wilful cloud
That rose, like human doubt, and loitered by :
From too great beauty of the breakers loud,

Beating upon the shingle, flying over
The white chalk cliffs, the green and lovely down,
Hurling a wet, most penetrating cover
Over the chimneys of the seaside town.

And in " The Man in the Street " he writes half in the idiom of

Ecclesiasticus and half in the vernacular of to-day with remarkable power.

The Richards Press publishes, with its recognized discrimination, *Lost Sheep*, by F. V. Murray (3s. 6d.). The author of these poems presents them tentatively, quoting : " . . . . the black and the white, the ewes and the lambs, which I have herded and gathered together into the one fold . . .. " and though the poems are not all of the same high quality, and even the best are sometimes weakened by a cheap rhyme, Mr. Murray knows well what he is aiming at. He has written these searching lines on " Poetry " :

Beyond the achievement of a man ?—perhaps . . . .
   Cloudy, ephemeral principles ?—but no !
   The fundamentals are like virgin snow
Invincible upon the mountain-caps,
Unassailed as the centuries elapse.
   For, though the organic millions surge and flow,
   Still in the human heart these things are so—
No dainty dreams tricked out in verbal wraps.

No vapourings ! but like basic threads inwrought
   Strengthening the ages, storied tapestry,
      Illumined by an emphasizing light !
So, since your practice jumps not with the thought,
   Design your life to step with poetry,
      Grieving you cannot weave the pattern right,

and though he condemns cities in a general way he can see " Juteopolis " with a poet's eyes.

Nelson's have added to their series of Centaur Poets another volume of distinction, *Equinox* by Robin Wilson (2s. 6d.). He is a poet one desires to read and re-read, each time discovering some fresh significance in the obliquities of his finely written verse. He can write, always with the same " felicity," crisply as in " Knapton Weathercock," tenderly as in " The Snows of Sleep " :

The snows of sleep are on his shoulder,
folded and drifted on his breast,
I turn from them and from the colder
flower of his face at rest.
Turn and return, rocked, lost, past all imagined
embrace of slumber, and to keep me warm
lay my head where the drifts in deepest number
sleep on his boyish arm.

and deeply as in his final poem :

When we are outlawed by the intelligence—
so ready to turn traitor on the soul—
outlawed by the heart, that in sheer defence cannot
endure the passions we would bring it to,

then infinite forgiveness, infinite justice
waits for the prodigal, pity tender as the grass,
joy fixed as the stars that stare from the night above,
and love abandoned to the last caress.

They are desperately, almost unrelievedly sad, the exquisite *Poems* of Anne Lyon (Miss Margaret Anne Bowes-Lyon) published by Faber and Faber at 6s. and printed at the press of Eric Gill and Rene Hague. Mood, image, rhythm, language, all are blended to the note of grief, and thus heard it is no dread harshness but a very lovely sound indeed. " Robin at Twilight " has the robin's sweetness in it as well :

Over and over again
A robin sharpens his clear call
Defeating twilight
Through the fine mist and fall
Of February rain.

His song's a beacon's blaze
Flaming the dusk from hill to hill,
Affirming light,
Though earth is winter still,
To the long dark of days.

This should be careless heard
By youth that turns with trees to leaf
And blossom bright.
It breaks the heart of grief,
This spring-foreboding bird.

A very delightful new anthology is *The Bird-Lovers' Book of Verse* (Witherby, 6s.). Miss Christina Chapin has compiled it from a great variety of sources ; old and new poems jostle one another, and the pleasures of surprise and recognition are many. In the older poems one is struck not so much by the occasional fantastic notions concerning Natural History as by its general accuracy, and by individual observation. James Thompson quotes but doubts the belief that swallows hibernate in the river banks in his " Migration." Altogether there are some lovely excerpts in this book ranging from Euripides to the present day. The careful editing has been extended to the indexes, of which there are three, besides biographical dates and the grading of poems according to their importance to their subject. Lino-cuts by Raphael Nelson give the finishing touch of decoration.

E. D. BANGAY.

A NEW SCOTS LYRIC POET.

The Image o' God, by Joe Corrie (The Porpoise Press, 3s. 6d.) suggests perhaps another reason for the lack of poets in Scotland besides those offered by Mr. Paulin in his article in last month's POETRY REVIEW. Mr. Corrie writes bitterly of the miner's life and living. The first verse of the title poem expresses his sentiments perfectly:

"Crawlin' aboot like a snail in the mud
Covered wi' clammy blae,
ME, made after the image o' God—
Jings! but it's laughable, tae."

One cannot but sympathise as bitterly with him, especially if such poets as he proves himself to be are lost to the world in the mines. In another poem he says:

"Then suddenly the hooter sounds its blatant blast,
Tearing the air and the silence to shreds.
Our masters' day has begun."

The italics are mine. The words are the epitome of his attitude to the miner's life—undoubtedly a true one.

Nor is he afraid to face the horrible ugliness of this life with the sensitive eyes of a poet. It has burnt him with its acid and he writes still feeling the hurt. Yet this does not rob him of his appreciation of all that is beautiful. We quote in full "A Lazy Lout" for its simplicity to show what Mr. Corrie can do when he loses his bitterness in visions. As undoubtedly one of the lyric poets of Scotland, we hope that he will lose his bitterness often.

"Give me a summer day
And a chestnut tree
To shield the naked rays
Of the sun from me.

"And let me lie down there
On a couch of grass,
With a window in the tree
Where white clouds pass.

"That is the life for me,
The life for me!
A lazy lout?
Thanks to the powers that be."

The poems in *The Legendary Shore*, by N. K. McCausland (The Richards Press, Ltd., 3s. 6d.) are perfectly described by the title of the book. Mr. McCausland writes of the land just beyond to-day and writes feelingly. We quote a short lyric, " The Arrowhead," which shows the direction in which his muse leads him, if not how far :

" Where sea and river clasp a narrow wedge
Of crumbling fields that shrink in vain retreat,
Where swans fly fast above the withered sedge
With heavy wings that sound their rhythmic beat,
I found an arrow that had entered Time,
That cleaving forty centuries till now
Unscarred by age, unbroken by the plough,
Could make the tangled ends of History meet.
Whose hand, I wonder, held it last to trace
The slender tang, the grooved and chiselled edge ?
Who made the shaft, and set it in its place ?
Who drew the bow, and let the arrow climb
That it should fall thus strangely at my feet,
And mark the age-long measure of a rhyme ?

There is a sense of certainty in these poems, as of one who has long brooded over the things which make, but are not made of this life, and this is even more strongly felt in the longer poems. We quote from " The Stranger," one of the best poems in the book :

" A room was prepared for the stranger that there he might be
Alone, wrapped round by the dark and the web of the sheeted rain ;
Where the sob of the sea
Might come to him over the reeds and the peat bog telling his sorrow."

In his next volume this poet should have overcome the slight vagueness of thought which now occasionally appears. We hope so, for this book comprises " Such stuff that dreams are made on "—surely the best foundation for poetry.

In *Remembrances*, by Denys Heatherford (Arthur H. Stockwell, Ltd., 3s.), we come to things of this world and we are permitted to share in the poet's love for nature and animals, hallowed by sacred memories. This is in no way a sentimental book (and for that reason perhaps the choice of title is unfortunate) but one expressing a simple and real enjoyment of life and a simple and real Christian faith. " The Bell " well expresses the poet's fancy :

Who rang so near to seven o'clock
Across the spread of wheat
A single voice to bid the flock
Of village souls to meet ?

My spirit, listening to the bell,
Seemed conscious of a change
From what it always used to tell
To folk within its range.

Leapt with a flutter then the fair
And stimulating hope
That Christ the Lord was busy there,
His hands upon the rope.

Lady Beecham, in her foreword to *Poems* by Frederick Joseph Patterson (Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., 3s. 6d.) says : " The flowers which blossom in the garden of the mind are most lasting." This is a book of such flowers, delicately wrought. The poems, if not strikingly original in thought, are really sincere. We quote from a love poem " Too fair for mortal pen."

" Which of thy blossoms must I choose
Where all in sweet perfection grow,
And by supreme incense confuse
The raptured mind of he who views,
And breathes what they bestow ? "

Yet, for all his love of beauty things, and thoughts, Mr. Patterson is not too squeamish to include addresses to beer and tobacco.

" The dwarves of yore made mighty spells,
While hammers fell like ringing bells
In places deep, where dark things sleep,
In hollow halls beneath the fells."

And that is the spirit of Professor Tolkien's book *The Hobbit* (George Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.), from which these lines are quoted. For this book is one of those whimsically fantastic tales for children of all ages. From the moment Gandalf, the wizard, sets his magic sign on Mr. Bilbo Baggin's door, which invites the dwarfs to tea and eventually rushes the Hobbit off on the wild adventure to rescue the dwarfs' treasure from the Dragon who has captured their halls under the Lonely Mountain, to the moment when Mr. Baggins returns to his hobbit-hole (" and that means comfort "), we live in an atmosphere of faery thought and adventures—a land where men are only introduced when they know all about dwarfs and goblins and dragons.

Not the least item to be commended in his book are the songs and poems which blend with and add to the lively and somewhat mysterious atmosphere. We quote part of the song the wood elves sang as they rolled the barrels, in which the dwarfs were escaping, into the river :

" Past the rushes, past the reeds,
Past the marsh's waving weeds,

Through the mist that riseth white
Up from mere and pool at night!
Follow, follow stars that leap
Up the heavens cold and steep;
Turn when dawn comes over land,
Over rapid, over sand,
South away! and South away!"

The publishers tell us on the dust jacket (upon the design of which we congratulate the author, as also upon the neatly fanciful illustrations) that *The Hobbit* was originally invented by Professor Tolkien to amuse his children. Lucky children! We certainly owe them a word of thanks for an introduction to the world of Never Never—of dwarfs and goblins, elves and spiders, and the Misty Mountains and the Forest of Murkwood (which is quite as mysterious as its name), and above all to that chirpy little fellow, Mr. Bilbo Baggins, the Hobbit, who did enjoy his adventure after all.

ALICE FORRESTER.

THE EDWARD THOMAS HILL TOP MEMORIAL.

On the fine afternoon of October 2nd the Edward Thomas Memorial on the Shoulder of Mutton Hill, Steep, near Petersfield, was unveiled quietly, informally, before about a hundred and fifty people. The Shoulder of Mutton is a high (and, for those who made the pilgrimage, painfully steep) escarpment, grass covered, framed in trees, overlooking the unspoiled sweep of one of Hampshire's loveliest regions—Edward Thomas's country. The memorial stone, which is almost at the summit of the hill at the fringe of the tree-cap, is a four-ton, unshaped sarsen, and is approached by a steep and narrow path. Up this they came, those who knew and loved Thomas, the man or his works, and their attendance was a true and very typical tribute to the poet. They were not the members of any esoteric literary circle, but, in many cases, people whom poetry had hardly effected until Thomas's spoke simply but vividly to them. Beside the Poet Laureate, Walter de la Mare and other of Thomas's contemporary poets, beside his variously talented family, there came other old friends, from his Fleet Street days, from his regiment, others who had never seen him, even the villagers, who recalled him with that strange inarticulate deference with which the layman respects the poet.

Mr. Masefield made a short and, I think, difficult speech. Criticism or eulogy, the usual tribute of one poet to another, would have been equally out of place; but, in accord with the informality of the surroundings, he confined his address entirely to the personal, describing, with sincere pleasure, his meetings with Thomas and his individual reactions to a few of Thomas's most appealing lines. Having known him well, he spoke of him as a friend.

Lord Horder then unveiled the stone, revealing an octagonal tablet inscribed:

> "This hillside is dedicated to the memory of Edward Thomas, Poet. Born in Lambeth, March 3rd, 1878. Killed in the Battle of Arras, April 9th, 1917. 'And I rose up, and knew that I was tired, and continued my journey'."

Lord Horder, speaking modestly of his guardianship of the Thomas country, hid the fact that his own great interest in poetry (he is a Vice-President of The Poetry Society) is essentially an active one. To his generosity was due the gift of the land, for the Shoulder of Mutton is a part of his estate, to his friendly appreciation was due a large measure of this belated recognition of Thomas's unappreciated life.

The ceremony over, the party walked down the hill to the cottage where Thomas lived for four years. Here Mr. H. W. Nevinson—after a short account of his personal knowledge of Thomas, of his first recognition of his talent when literary editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, of Thomas's life of disappointment and self-criticism which finally gave way, at the advent of the war, to perfect self-expression in the poems—unveiled a small tablet while trumpeters sounded reveille from the hillside.

A third tablet was unveiled later in the afternoon, when a cot at Petersfield Hospital was dedicated to the poet. Mrs. Thomas performed the unveiling and presented a cheque to the hospital, and Dr. Ball, Bishop of Chichester, in a short address, stressed Thomas's love of children and the healing quality of his work. The greatest English poetry, he said, has the quality of healing. He hoped the name above the cot would mean something real and vital to those who worked around it.

Typical of the ebb and flow of public recognition of Thomas is that, although in his lifetime he was known for his journalistic prose, all three tablets dedicated to his memory call him "Poet." J.H.E.

Three memorable books concerning Irish poets, *A Vision*, by W. B. Yeats; *A Memoir of AE*—the authorized life of G. W. Russell, and *The Living Torch*, by A.E., edited by Monk Gibbon, are on Macmillan's autumn list, and will be the subject of a special article in our next issue by Mr. H. T. Hunt Grubb, the confrère of both Yeats and A.E.

That remarkable South African poet Arthur Vine Hall has now achieved the sixth edition of his collected poems (Longmans, Green, 10s. 6d.), and as we have shown our appreciation of his work on several previous occasions in these pages, we now feel moved to a note of admiration rather than critical assessment. This new edition is finely produced with nine coloured plates, and contains all his most memorable poems, some dealing intimately with South African life, some with child-life. Mr. Vine Hall is always fluent and frequently picturesque, and his name may eventually be known as well in England as it is in South Africa.

THE EPIC OF ENGLAND

(*To the Editor of* The Poetry Review)

The current number of the Poetry Review is specially noteworthy for a suggestion put forward by Mr. R. Ray in favour of the compilation of a National Epic. Outstanding Epic poets are rare in any language. For sheer ability to tell a noble story in ringing verse that holds the memory, Scott and Macaulay among English poets stand supreme. But the theme of the whole fabric of England's history is too long a tale, and too complicated, for even the most Homeric of writers. It follows that the Epic must be the work of many pens and of many minds. The best of our historic poems could be collected and strung together, like jewels on a string, in chronological order—not of their composition, but of the events to which they refer.

Can it be done? To do it comprehensively would be a tremendous task. But a good selection of the best English historic and narrative poems could be made within reasonable limits, to give a fair view of our history from the earliest days to our own. It would be an enterprise well worth undertaking.

All great poems must *begin* nobly. And in this adventure we are singularly fortunate. For after James Thomson's "Rule Britannia."

When Britain first at Heaven's command
Arose from out the azure main.

for an Introduction, we strike the heroic note at once, with Cowper's "Boadicea."

When the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods.

The period of the Roman occupation will not yield much, for though it was an age of high civilization—such a civilization as once lost by the withdrawal of the Roman legions, was not recovered for more than a thousand years—its memorial has largely perished, and its remains are for the antiquary rather than the poet. Its knell is sounded in Tennyson's "Coming of Arthur." "*The old order changeth, yielding place to new.*" And with King Arthur we pass into Fairyland. The "Idylls of the King" and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* are not strict history, and the manners portrayed are those of a much later age, but they strictly belong to the Legends of England, and have their place in the Epic as truly as Hector and Achilles in the tale of Troy, or Æneas and Dido in the story of ancient Rome.

Arthur leaves us as he came, "the old order changing, yielding place to new," and the Saxons inherit the land. For the Saxon period we have a noble poem, "The Battle of Brunanburgh," which could be given both in the original version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and in Tennyson's translation. There is also G. K. Chesterton's "Ballad of the White Horse"; and so we come to Harold and the Norman Conquest. Here again we have Tennyson, and extracts from Stephen

Phillips. Will justice even be done to Tennyson as a *historic* writer? As a patriot poet he has few equals, or none, in any nation.

The tragedy of "Macbeth" comes next. It is largely legendary yet cannot be omitted; and then "Becket" (Tennyson again), or the "Murder in the Cathedral" (T. S. Eliot). For the Plantagenets we have Shakespeare's historical plays, and Marlowe's "Edward the Second." Side by side with these come the popular Ballads of Robin Hood, again largely a legendary character, but it would be false to history to leave out the Ballads that came from the very heart of the people. Chaucer gives us the manners of the upper and well-to-do classes, and "Piers Plowman" the contemporary state of the poor. Two famous battle pieces belong to this period: Bruce's address to his army before Bannockburn *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled* by Robert Burns, and Michael Drayton's "Agincourt,"

Fair stood the wind for France
When we our sails advance,

and the stirring Ballad of Chevy Chase,

God prosper long our noble king,
Our lives and safeties all.

All these must find their place in the Epic of England, and with them (ranking perhaps above them all) the "Kings Quair" by James I of Scotland, a poet of rare beauty even apart from his kingly rank, describing his capture and captivity, and the coming of Love at the sight of Joan Beaufort walking in the grounds of the Castle where he was confined.

The Tudor period brings us at once to a richer literature, and the difficulty may be that of selection. It is curious, perhaps, that the best description of Flodden comes from the pen of a Scotsman, but "Marmion" has no equal:

The stubborn spearmen still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood
The instant that he fell.

Tennyson has two noble pieces belonging to this age, the description of the Death of Cranmer (Queen Mary, Act IV) and "The Revenge."

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,

and, doubtless the best-known of all, Macaulay's "Armada"

Attend, all ye who list to hear our noble England's praise.

Contemporary with Elizabeth is Mary Queen of Scots, and the stream of literature becomes so wide that the only difficulty will be that of choice. Burns and Swinburne and many others have been inspired by the cruel fate of the tragic and romantic Queen. One would specially mention the lovely verses by Alfred Noyes,

They carried her down with singing
With singing soft and low;

Slowly round the curve they came!
Twenty torches dipping flame'
The heralds that were bringing her
The way we all must go.

So the Stuart Kings came to England. Place must certainly be found for King James VI and I and "His Majesty's Own Sonnet," "*God gives not Kings the style of 'gods' in vain*" (see Psalm 82, etc.), for the sonnet was written, like the *Basilikon Doron*, for the instruction of the King's eldest son Henry Prince of Wales, and sets forth the highest ideals of kingship—too high to be practicable in this uncertain changing world. These kingly ideals clashed with other ideals, and the Civil Wars resulted.

For the Rebellion there is choice of poems on both sides. Among contemporary poets, actually fighting on the Royal side, we have Richard Lovelace

Stone walls do not a prison make
Nor iron bars a cage,

and again,

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Lov'd I not honour more,

and Sir William Davenant. On the Puritan side are Milton and Andrew Marvell. If choice is made from modern poets, a word of caution may be needed with regard to the common misrepresentation of the Cavaliers as a roystering rollicking crew. The Cavaliers were in arms for Loyalty and Religion, and in such a cause were willing to suffer and to die.

The Restoration gives us Butler's "Hudibras." Dryden is rather obscured by the choice of allegorical names, but even "Lilibulero" (though the veriest trash ever written) must have its place in our Epic, for it was the ditty that literally laughed or whistled King James II off this throne and into exile.

The earlier kings of the Hanoverian dynasty did not evoke any poetry worth remembering either during their lifetime or since. Pope illustrates the somewhat artificial life of the "Augustan" age, and Gray's Elegy brings the rural England of the eighteenth century to life again. No one can read the poem without seeing the England of two hundred years ago living and moving before his eyes. The Scottish Jacobite Ballads must have their place in an Epic: for, though generally written later, they show the Old Cavalier spirit chastened and purified by suffering and defeat. They are, too, the last breath of an entirely independent Scotland, not yet reconciled to complete union with England. Among these the National Anthem must be reckoned. Strange that among all the changes and alterations to which the anthem has been subjected, the fourth line *Send him victorious* still breathes the Jacobite prayer for the restoration of the exiled and hereditary Stuart King.

And so we come to the Napoleonic period. Two short poems stand out as of first-class excellence: Thomas Campbell's "Battle of the Baltic:"

Of Nelson and the North
Sing the glorious day's renown.

and Charles Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore," *Not a drum was heard: not a funeral note.*

To Byron belongs the singular distinction of not only writing the best poem on Waterloo, but also of being the best interpreter to England of the spirit of the New Age that animated the hearts of men, and so led to the French Revolution; and led also to the War of Independence in which the poet was to give his life for Greece.

Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd from bleeding sire to son,
Tho' baffled oft, is ever won.

The Epic will not confine itself to war. But as war expresses the feelings that are dearest to the hearts of men,—so precious that men are willing to sacrifice even their lives for them,—and as war is also the solution of problems that peace has failed to resolve, it is inevitable that history (and therefore the Epic of History) must be largely occupied with war. But poetry is able to express its admiration for the victories of peace "no less renowned than those of war," and its constant sympathy with suffering and pain. Nothing can be more poignant, or more terribly revealing of the social condition of the age, than Hood's "Song of the Shirt"; and if the Epic is to be true to history, this song (first published in *Punch*) must have its place in it,

With fingers weary and worn
  With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
  Plying her needle and thread.

We can only hope the terrible song has had its effect in the improvement of social conditions and the recognition of labour.

The Victorian period brings us to Tennyson again. The "Burial of the Duke of Wellington" marks the end of an age. The "Charge of the Light Brigade" and the "Defence of Lucknow," bring us to the verge of living memory. Perhaps if the Epic begins with Thomson's "Rule Britannia" it may appropriately close with William Blake.

"*And did those feet in ancient times*
  Walk upon England's mountains green?"

. . . . .

I will not cease from mental fight,
  Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
  In England's green and pleasant land."

Surely it is an enterprise for the University Presses.

D. R. Fotheringham,
Secretary of the Byron Society.

ONE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

THE POETRY REVIEW has published many interesting articles on the poet's source of inspiration, but up till now no concrete cases have been cited, and I therefore call attention to the important part psychometry plays in awakening the finer vibrations of our being, leading up to that state of exaltation which is essential for the birth of inspired poetry.

Psychometry, or soul sensing, can act in various ways, but its effect can always be quickened by personal contact with some article belonging to, or place closely associated with, the individual with whom we are desirous of coming into touch in thought and feeling, and the power is equally effective, whether the personality sought is on the earth plane or has passed over.

In order to illustrate the truth of this, I will give some concrete examples from my own actual experiences with the memories of Rupert Brooke, James Elroy Flecker, and Byron, poets whose lives and works I have studied and spoken upon in numerous lecture recitals, and will illustrate my thesis by quotations from some of the poems inspired by my presence in beautiful and harmonious surroundings, known and loved by the one in whose honour the poems were inspired.

In the spring of 1920, when preparing a poetry recital on Rupert Brooke, I was guided to visit Grantchester, where I saw the church, mill, and Granta stream, and went over the " Old Vicarage " where the poet resided. The pilgrimage influenced me to compose a poem in Rupert Brooke's honour, but satisfactory opening lines were withheld from me. Realizing that the finest poetry is inspired and never forced, and that " the purest essence of poetry can only be distilled from the white heat of emotion," I made another pilgrimage to Grantchester, where I went over " The Orchard," Rupert's first home there, and then walked through the mystic wood, which is the approach to Byron's Pool, where the poet frequently bathed.

Let me interpolate here, that several successive poets, including Tennyson, and James Elroy Flecker, have followed Byron's example by bathing in the pool named after him. It must be quite obvious, that the peculiar psychometry of the atmosphere, surroundings and their associations, could not fail to react upon anyone who came directly under the spell, and I will now relate what happened to myself:

Sitting in the shade beside the pool, and looking into the sunshine, I mused for some time, when quite suddenly I experienced a feeling of ecstasy, during which my spirit seemed to leave the body, and the words came to me as if wafted on the wind :

O ! gifted youth, whose beauty shone
In feature, friendship, and in song ;
Thy presence on this planet's stage,
Confined to prologue, know not age.

During the few minutes that elapsed with this experience, a canoe came suddenly round the bend of the river, and so intent were my thoughts concentrated on Rupert Brooke that had he been the rover it would have seemed the most natural thing in the world, but when I saw a strange face I was quickly brought back to earth and the spell was brought to an abrupt end.

Encouraged by the inspiration given me, on my return home I worked at my poem, and although it had by then attained to the exceptional length of sixty-three lines, I was satisfied that none could be rightly spared, and so I forwarded it to *The Observer*, where it found immediate favour with the editor, Mr. J. L. Garvin, and was published in full in the issue of Sunday, August 1st, 1920, the nearest date to the poet's birthday, which is on the 3rd.

A second example concerns " The Pink and Lily " Inn, which stands on one of the highest ridges of the Chilterns at Princes Risborough. In its sitting-room are some verses of Rupert Brooke hanging framed on the wall. They commemorate his going there with Jacques Raverat, and by a remarkable coincidence the present writer when staying there over St. George's Day, 1934, met a lady who told him that once when reading the verses on the wall she became conscious that a smiling youth was looking round the door at her, and when she turned she found herself face to face with the poet himself.

Occupying Rupert Brooke's bed sitting-room I became quickly immersed in the psychometry of its intimate atmosphere and association, and the feeling was intensified after taking some walks in the neighbourhood which were familiar to the poet who paid many visits to the inn, and after I had stayed a few days the following poem rose naturally to my mind, giving expression to what my surroundings had evoked :

Here Rupert stayed and loved the country side,
The beech-crowned hills with vistas far and wide
To Oxford's stately domes and dreamy towers,
Its spacious college lawns and flowery bowers,
Thy spirit haunts this spot from out the dead,
The bracing upland ways that knew thy tread,
Near by the mystic woods, where tall straight trees,
When stirred to motion, whisper to the breeze ;
And ere the wistful twilight hours are spent,
My consecrated thoughts on thee are bent.

. . . . .

Within the Inn—home comforts for the guest,
Thy bed and table—window seat at rest.

The hostess of the inn told me that every year after his passing, the poet's mother used to pay a visit to this spot which her son Rupert so loved in life.

When studying James Elroy Flecker in 1925, preparatory to giving a lecture recital on his life and work, I visited many places associated with him in the Cotswold district, including Painswick Beacon, with its magnificent panorama of Cheltenham, Gloucester, Forest of Dean, and the Severn estuary with its bridge. This was the poet's favourite picnic spot in the west country, and aided by the beauty and psychometry of the surroundings, so loved by Flecker, the opening of the sixty-three lines, "In Tribute," composed in the poet's honour were born in my heart:

O! gifted Architect of Dream,
Thy jewelled thoughts like rubies gleam,
All set in wondrous colouring
Glimmering, flashing, shimmering—
Four English rivers stirred thy blood;
Thou lov'dst the Severn's winding flood,
The Thames at London graced thy birth,
Isis and Granta prized thy worth.
For thee
Heredity crowned diction king,
Bequeathed thy muse the power to sing
Of beauty, colour, passion, place,
Greek Gods, and men of classic race,
In verse that flows with joy and tears,
Along thy course of ardent years.

When in Greece, representing The Poetry Society at the unveiling of the memorial to "Rupert Brooke and Immortal Poetry" on the Isle of Scyros, which was performed by His Excellency Eleutherios Venizelos, Prime Minister of Greece, on Easter Sunday, 1931, I made a pilgrimage to Cape Sunion, immortalized by Byron. When there, after bathing, the poet would climb the lofty rocky summit and sit for hours looking out towards the Cyclades.

It was then his poetic fervour rose to its sublimest heights for the beautiful vision that met his gaze reacted on his muse. It was here Byron narrowly escaped being kidnapped by pirates, but was saved by the presence of his Albanian guards. When at Cape Sunion I found its atmosphere, associations, and entrancing beauty so enthralling, that I was inspired to compose a short poem, which I posted to *The Athens Times* the same evening.

On the Saturday following, sailing out of the harbour of Piraeus, bound for home, as I stood upon the deck of the S.S. *Patras II*, taking a farewell look at the Parthenon, set in stately magnificence on its hill—its marble columns glistening in the sunlight, with the purple mountains for background, and for halo the blue Athenian sky—a scene that I was thinking Byron would have often witnessed and loved, news was brought to me that my little poem on Cape Sunion, composed in Byron's honour a few days before, had been published that morning in *The Athens Times*:

Behold the Cyclades!
Set in immortal loveliness and ease
Like sparkling gems on the Aegean seas.
In pagan majesty the Temple stands,
Its rocky base the Cape's proud soaring height,
Below the blue-clear waters kiss the sands,
The marble Doric columns glisten white.

Earth, sea, and sky reveal true beauty's store,
The waves' soft music echoes from the shore
Here, Byron stood and mused in bygone days,
He loved the classic scene that met his gaze,
For after Athens—city of his heart,
Cape Sunion won the dauntless poet's praise!

Psychometry is definitely one of the important sources of inspiration vouchsafed to poets, and in bringing it to their aid, it is wise to seize the moment of ecstasy when it comes, as it is too precious to return to them a second time. Poetry is one of the divine gifts of the Gods, breathing beauty over a world of care and pain. It cometh not to any beckoning finger, but like the wind, bloweth when and where it listeth, and it is only to the ready, ardent, and listening ear that it speaks with beauty, clarity, and vision.

Ruislip. WALLIS MANSFORD.
Coronation Day 1937.

Love in a Mist is another small collection of verse by C. J. Arnell (Poetry Publishing Co., Exeter, 1s.) who has devoted a long life to poetry as author, editor, publisher, and poetry adviser to the *Western Morning News*. As author he has previously published three volumes of verse and a concise and useful *Art and Practice of Versification*. He has edited three anthologies, *Poets of the Wight*, and *West Country New Anthology*, Vols. I and II, and was founder and until the end of 1931 editor of the *Decachord*, which numbered among its contributors Lady Margaret Sackville, Eden Phillpotts, Alberta Vickridge, Alfred Noyes, Humbert Wolfe, and Edwin Faulkner, whilst in the capacity of poetry adviser to the *Western Morning News*, and a director of the Poetry Publishing Co., he has been a constant source of encouragement and aid to verse writers. It naturally follows, therefore, that in this further collection, Mr. Arnell shows himself as usual an accomplished craftsman. In contrast to the obscurity and muddied thought which characterize so much of what has passed for poetry since the war, Mr. Arnell's verse is limpid, well thought out, and effectively expressed. The sentiment is wholesome with now and then a touch of pathos and a hint at deeper things as in *The Colonel* and *The Wanderer*. In *Love in a Mist*, the title poem, there is a fine confidence, whilst in *Spells* and *Musings* there is fancy, in the one reflective, in the other delicate, most pleasantly expressed. The gem of the book, however, is the Chaucerian *Elegy* on the poet's dead cat, which deserves quoting.

Mrs. Ira Duane Hough, of Brooklyn, N.Y., in a letter to the Editor, writes: I want especially to express my interest in the nature of the contents of THE POETRY REVIEW. I was attending the Congress of American Poets, and a *very* celebrated individual came to talk to us one day, and I found myself listening with rapt attention to an address on A. E. Houseman; but she had nothing new—I had already read it in your—our—magazine!

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

Our Premium winners do not this time offer anything quite so unusual as Radcliffe Bennington's *The Fields*, which appeared in the July number of The Poetry Review, but they give in each case verse which holds the attention and is cast in genuine poetic form.

Mr. Pittaway's *Lichens and Moss* (of which the title might mislead a little) is perhaps nearest to the traditional form. Miss Slade's *Captivity* is flexible and modern in its form, and yet has the virtue of crystal clearness and economy of language. Miss Alden's *The Tale Goes On* has this point in common with Miss Slade's poem that it is written in short lines, elastic in form, yet holding the reader by their rhythm, and using the aid of rhyme to keep the poem firmly together. Mrs. Skene has written four lyrics of varying merit and charm. The awards are to : Brenda F. Skene, London, W. ; Elizabeth F. Alden, Haddenham ; Hilda M. Slade, Ramsgate ; T. Pittaway, Frome.

Taking the present entries as a whole, it can be said that a smaller proportion than usual has been received of anything that could be called "free verse." This kind of verse is so difficult to write well that one wonders whether it will not be left to a few recognized practitioners. We have received some good examples of this type of work in the recent past from *Miss O. C. Dougan* and *Mr. W. D. Hinde*, but, on this occasion Mr. Hinde, at any rate, has abandoned the form for something more conventional.

Amongst those "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of the names of K. V. Chevis, "Cloudrider" and R. G. Duff, and amongst those "Commended" of Langford Budville. The translations from Sappho and Catullus by E. H. Whishaw are also worthy of great praise.

Highly Commended :

Kathleen Anderson, Kingswood ;
Vera I. Arlett, Worthing ;
Nanita M. Balcom, Chevy Chase ;
M. D. Cameron, Kirkhill, Inverness ;
T. E. Casson, Pennington ;
K. V. Chevis, Abbot's Langley ;
Cloudrider, Budapest ;
R. G. Duff, Teignmouth ;
Gertrude A. Fitzcharles, Ipswich ;
Mary Gordon, Kingston Hill ;
Margaret Lockerbie-Goff, London, N.
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
Laurence W. Hockey, Newport, Mon. ;
Edith Mary Mann, Dovercourt ;
Enid Norman, Weston-super-Mare ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
H. T. D. Robinson, St. Petersburg, Florida ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
E. H. Whishaw, Whimple.

Commended :

Mary Alexander, Epsom ;
Langford Budville, Worthing ;
O. C. Dougan, London, N. ;
Reginald C. Eva, Hove ;

E. M. Fison, Felixstowe ;
Margaret L. Foster, Wallington;
William Frankland, Burnley ;
Christine L. Henderson, Montreal ;
May H. Hill, Pangbourne ;
W. D. Hinde, Manchester ;
G. M. Hort, London, N.W. ;
Yvonne Wingfield King, London, S.W. ;
Irene H. Lewis, Dorking ;
John Lawrence, Newton Abbot;
Redcliffe McKie, Hove ;
Enid W. Mark, Purley ;
I. M. Mills, Roydon-by-Ware ;
B. F. Pargiter, Aldershot ;
Marsh O'Raffa, Exeter ;
Bertha M. Skeat, Bexhill-on-Sea ;
Ivy Taylor, London, S.W. ;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham.

The usual premium competition is continued. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before December 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.)

A tea and talk meeting at The Poets' Fellowship (a verse writing group within The Poetry Society) will be held at 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1, on Saturday, November 20th, when Mr. George Rostrevor Hamilton, the distinguished poet and critic, will initiate a discussion on the theories handled in his new book *Poetry and Contemplation, a Preface to Poetics*. Tickets (1s. 6d. or two for 2s. 6d.) must be applied for in advance.

Mr. T. Weston Ramsey, an authority on the sonnet and the author of many admirable examples, has reported as follows on the Fleming polysyllabic sonnet competition :

Out of the surprisingly large number of entries received for this very difficult competition it was easily possible to pick out ten which had merits well above the others, because these ten have some conception of the inner spirit of a sonnet as well as of its outward form. Their names (not in order of merit) are :—

Iërne Ormsby, M. S. Hewer, I. Sutherland Groom, Eric C. Finlayson, Edith Mary Mann, Lettie Cole, Jean Hope, Morwyth Rees, Hilda M. Slade and Charles Woodhouse.

The last named competitor, as if in contempt of the task, sent in four entries, one at least of fairly high standard.

The most imaginative entry—one of the few that departed from the rather obvious "funeral cortège" theme was "The Witch-Girl" by Morwyth Rees. But the abrupt jerk of the first line takes polish off the sonnet.

I. Sutherland Groom's "Victorian Funeral" is a strong and well-ordered sonnet, marred by the fact that we do not feel the change of key from octave to sestet which is an essential beauty in the Petrarchan sonnet.

" Burial of a Queen " by Enid M. Norman has not this defect and is a moving sonnet, remarkably spontaneous in feeling, and the one in which I felt least the sense of bonds having been assumed. These were the three best, and I should award the " parsley crown " to ENID M. NORMAN.

I.—BURIAL OF A QUEEN.

Honour her with this last magnificence.
She ever lived aloof, majestical,
Wrapped round in splendid ceremonial
As though to shield her from Love's negligence.
Her pomp was but a tawdry recompense
For the rich wine of Life's high festival ;
See, at a sad old woman's funeral
None weep, though crowds pay duty's reverence.

She whom all feared, why did she hesitate,
Trembling, at this the final enterprise ?
The grave in marble will immortalize
Her virtues, and will guard inviolate
Her secret : She feared Death, feared to awaken
A shivering spirit, throneless and forsaken.

ENID M. NORMAN.

II.—THE WITCH GIRL.

Beyond the wood, sunset's magnificence ;
Among the pillared trees majestical,
Fit temple for strange ceremonial,
A young witch walks with wary negligence,
Waiting for night to bring her recompense,
For moon-rise, time of magic festival.
A rising wind wails a soul's funeral ;
The leaves turn, bow in mocking reverence.

Moonlight at length ; she does not hesitate,
But calls dark minions to her enterprise.
Heaven's shut to her ; she must immortalize
Her earthly body, kept inviolate.
Quick, weave your spell, that when the birds awaken
You will be fair for ever—and forsaken.

MORWYTH REES.

III.—A VICTORIAN FUNERAL.

As though they spurned their own magnificence,
The horses move with tread majestical,
Fit actors in a ceremonial
That leaves no room for chance or negligence :

There is in solemn pomp a recompense,
A virtue in the gloomy festival
That makes of this slow-moving funeral
A pilgrimage of ordered reverence :
Aeons from us ; and yet we hesitate
To mock the measure of its enterprise,
If symbols can a love immortalize
And keep a lover's faith inviolate,
Until he sees those tender eyes awaken
And knows his earthly love is not forsaken.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

ELSA KAZI, of HYDERABAD, SIND, sends us THE GYPSY as an example of the simplicity in poetry loved by many readers and an antidote against too much " highbrow " verse :

When by the meadow I did pass
I saw a gipsy in the grass . . . .
Red, red poppy !

Within her eyes a dusky fire.
Upon her lips a sweet desire.
Red, red poppy.—

She smiled, and would my fortune tell.
She cast on me a magic spell . . .
Red, red poppy.

She danced for me from noon till eve ;
The lovely lass I could not leave . . .
Red, red poppy.

But when at last I had to part
It broke her little gipsy-heart.
. . . Red, red poppy.

I claimed a kiss before I left—
She smiled a smile of joy bereft . . .
Red, red poppy.

And when I touched her lips, she sighed ;
She dropped upon the ground and died.
Red, red poppy !

The wind bewailed her scattered charms,
He gathered her into his arms
Red, red poppy.

And then away with her he sped—
. . . I wept and sorrowed for my dead
Red, red poppy. . . .

A DANTE-BROWNING-HORACE CHRISTMAS PILGRIMAGE

THE Poetry Society, in conjunction with the Byron Society, the Dante Society, the Horatian Society and the Anglo-Italian Society, has arranged for a special visit during the Christmas holidays to Florence and Rome with special reference to the Dante, Browning and Horace associations of these wonderful centres of poetry and art. The party will leave London (Victoria) at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, December 29th, returning on Wednesday, January 12th.

The cost per head will be eighteen guineas, providing for second class and saloon return railway tickets from London to Rome, via the short sea crossing, Paris-Mont Cenis-Turin-Pisa-Florence; first-class on boat; reservation of special coach, or coaches, for the outward journey, with through coach from Boulogne; accommodation at hotels of the same type as the Continental Hotel at Rome, including all meals, gratuities and the various taxes; transportation of passengers and baggage from station to hotel, and vice versa.

Non-members of the associated Societies may join on paying a booking fee of 7s. 6d.

Participants who wish to prolong their stay in Italy and have the advantage of further reduced railway charges and hotel facilities may do so provided notice is given before they leave London and a supplementary charge of one guinea is paid; other arrangements can be made through the C.I.T. official travel office in Rome. Members of the party who do not avail themselves of this privilege will be required to travel with the party out of Italy, but the return journey may be broken elsewhere en route, members returning to London individually if they wish.

The travel ticket does not include meals on trains but these can be arranged for in advance if required, either in the restaurant car or in the form of luncheon baskets; otherwise it is thought desirable for members to make their own arrangements for food en route. Applications for tickets must be made on a special form to be obtained from THE POETRY SOCIETY or the C.I.T., 77 Regent Street, W.1, and all bookings must be completed before December 15th. Tourist lire for individual use may be obtained through the C.I.T. on production of passport.

All enquiries concerning this pilgrimage must be sent in the first instance to the Secretary, THE POETRY SOCIETY (Inc.), 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

A special programme giving effect to the basic objects of the pilgrimage is being arranged at both Florence and Rome; particulars with a specific itinerary will be sent to participants later. The special courtesies offered will include a reception by the Municipality of Florence and honorary membership of the British Institute with use of their hall, etc., and the kindly co-operation of the distinguished Director of the Institute, who is an authority on Dante and Browning, and it is hoped that the Rt. Hon. Lord Rennell of Rodd, G.C.B., etc. (one time Ambassador in Rome and preserver of the Keats-Shelley graves) will again meet the pilgrims in Italy.

A visit to Dante's tomb in Ravenna is included in the itinerary, but it may be found desirable to incur some additional optional motor coach charges in Florence and Rome.

See an illuminating article by T. Weston Ramsey on " Dante's Pilgrimage " in THE POETRY REVIEW for Nov.-Dec., and THE POETRY REVIEW for Sept.-Oct., for an account of the Keats-Shelley pilgrimage. Concerning Latin poetry and Horace to whom special attention will be given, Dr. J. W. Mackail, Vice-President of The Poetry Society, writes : " Of all the external influences which have moulded or inspired English poetry, Latin is the most continuous and most potent. We owe to the Roman genius certain acknowledged and supreme masterpieces ; but we owe to it further a sense of disciplined form which has controlled the irregular impulses of the romantic or insular temperament, has civilized English poetry, given it a new elevation, dignity, and precision, made it classical. . . . Two names among the Latin poets, those of Virgil and Horace, stand apart from all the rest. They have been, and are, the schoolbooks and the companions of the whole world ; forming the mind of youth, and yielding more and more of their secret to prolonged study and inveterate acquaintance. . . . Horace is at once the widest in his appeal and the most exquisite in his workmanship of Latin lyric poets. . . . His Odes became a sort of Psalter of secular life ; his Satires and Epistles have been, for the whole European world, the great handbook of good sense, good temper, and practical wisdom. No one has done more to spread and fix and make attractive that spirit of ' humanity,' which, like its name, is of Latin creation. He gave mankind the type of the man of the world and the gentleman ; he showed how it is attainable without birth or wealth, without anxiety or ambition, without either high intellectual gifts or unattainable saintliness of life."

In Rome also special attention will be paid to the exhibition commemorating the bi-millenary of the great Emperor Augustus, concerning whom *The Times* concluded an eloquent homage to Rome with the reminder that " With the splendour of the feasts, the beauty of art, the higher schools, the protection of the poets and men of letters, Augustus made Rome the greatest centre of the ancient world. Here from the chilly wilds of Germany and from the Courts of the Parthian kings East met West, and so vast did this movement become that Horace was led to say that the sun had never seen any thing to surpass it."

The Rudyard Kipling Memorial Fund to perpetuate his memory by the establishment of The Rudyard Kipling Foundation, will be inaugurated by a banquet at Grosvenor House on November 17th, to meet " Stalky " (Major-General L. C. Dunsterville, C.B., C.S.I.) and " Mc Turk " (Mr. G. C. Beresford). The Council of the Fund, on which The Poetry Society is represented, intend to erect at Westward Ho and Windsor commemorative plaques and stained windows, and to build and equip a Kipling Library at the Imperial Service College, Windsor, and also to provide a capital sum, the annual income therefrom to be devoted to the provision of bursaries at the Imperial Service College for fifty boys, the sons of men engaged in the Governmental and public services resident in the United Kingdom, in H.M. Dominions, in India and in the Colonial Empire and such other boys as the local Committees of the Fund may select. The boys so chosen will be known as " Kipling Scholars."

END OF VOL. XXVIII